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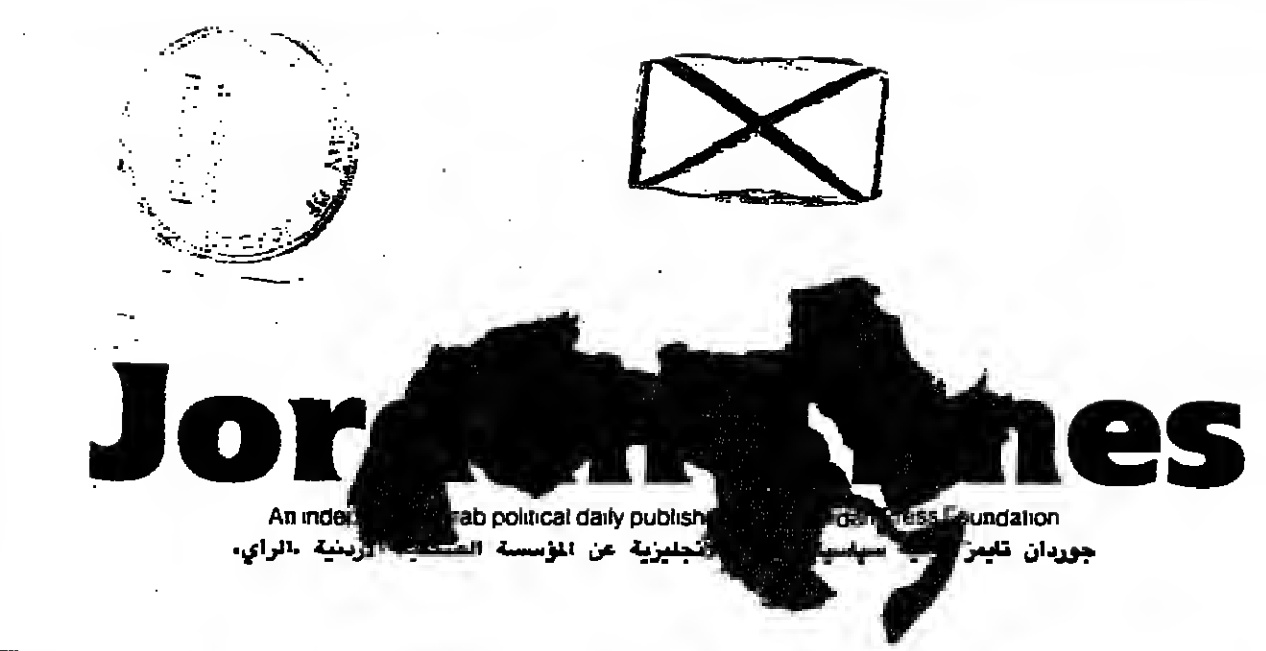
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Cedras expects U.S. invasion

PORT-AU-PRINCE (AFP) — Haiti's military chief Raoul Cedras said in an interview aired Saturday that a U.S. invasion was inevitable and predicted it would be bloody. "I don't think that any arrangement can be made to avoid an invasion of Haiti," he said in an interview from the Haitian capital with CNN. "It has been decided to invade and we are awaiting this moment," he said, adding: "We are getting ready. As soldiers we have sworn to defend our country." The United Nations approved a resolution Sunday giving the greenlight for a U.S.-led invasion of the Caribbean nation to force the military to step aside and reinstate ousted President Bertrand Aristide (see inside). "If they (the U.S. military) intervene, it will be bloodshed on both sides," General Cedras said through an interpreter. "It will be to kill a lot of military and a lot of civilians also." Gen. Cedras said the crisis sparked by the 1991 coup which toppled Mr. Aristide could be resolved through negotiations, but added: "We would need much dialogue and many exchanges." He noted that there was support for holding new elections but would not say whether Mr. Aristide should be allowed to run.



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جوردان تايمز - جريدة عربية سياسية مستقلة - مؤسسة الصحافة العربية

U.N. urges Somalis to cooperate

MOGADISHU (R) — A U.N. special envoy urged Somalia's warring factions on Saturday to cooperate with the world body, particularly as it was soon to review the future of its operation here. Ambassador Victor Ghebreyesus, special representative of the U.N. secretary-general, was speaking after repeated clashes between factions and the July 30 killing of a Zimbabwean peacekeeper by militia gunmen in the central town of Belet-Huen. "The recent fighting between the Somali factions in Belet-Huen remains a matter of grave concern, especially as Somali leaders are deploying efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement," Mr. Ghebreyesus said in a statement. "Such actions do not favour the interests of Somalia particularly at a time when the Security Council is reviewing the role of the United Nations in the country. It is imperative that all Somali leaders cooperate with UNOSOM (U.N. Operation in Somalia) to ensure the successful implementation of its mandate." Zimbabwe has 800 soldiers in a force of Asian and African troops which continued peacekeeping duties in Somalia after most Western countries withdrew earlier this year.

Christopher says progress possible on Syrian track

Combined agency dispatches

U.S. SECRETARY OF State Warren Christopher, back in the Middle East for the second time in less than a month, said Israel and Syria were negotiating with unprecedented seriousness and progress was possible.

Speaking in the Egyptian port of Alexandria after talks with President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, he also said he wrote to donors on Friday urging them to hurry up and send funds to the Palestinian self-rule areas. (see separate story)

"I've come back because I think there is an opportunity for the parties to make progress. There are very tough issues but they (Israel and Syria) are addressing them with a seriousness that they never had before," he added.

Mr. Christopher, who later flew to Israel, and Egyptian officials say they see signs that Syria, now lagging behind Jordan and the Palestinians in talks with Israel, is becoming more receptive to the idea of peace with the Jewish state after more than 40 years of conflict.

But an official Syrian newspaper said Syria had nothing new to offer Mr. Christopher or to justify talk of a breakthrough.

"Some optimists claim that a breakthrough was achieved in the Syrian-Israeli track.

Realists confirm that there is nothing new in the Syrian position which justifies such big optimism," the newspaper Al Thawra said in a front-page editorial.

Mr. Christopher declined to be drawn on the gap between the Syrian and Israeli positions, saying that it would not be useful for him as a mediator to make these public.

The main obstacle in the talks remains reconciling Syria's demand that Israel promise to withdraw from all the Golan Heights with Israel's demand that Syria say first precisely what kind of peace it envisages.

Damascus has rejected an Israeli proposal for a staged withdrawal from parts of the Golan over eight years in return for full normal relations. It said Israel should withdraw in full before they discuss future ties.

Mr. Christopher was due to meet Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in occupied Jerusalem later Saturday.

Mr. Christopher was scheduled to travel to Syria on Sunday and Jordan on Monday during his trip.

He said before leaving Alexandria that he had spoken with Mr. Mubarak to gain "inside information" about recent talks between the Egyptian president and his Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad, as well as a meeting



Warren Christopher held with Mr. Rabin. Mr. Mubarak told journalists he hoped Israel and Syria could "reach a solution by the end of this year."

A State Department official said Mr. Mubarak had told Mr. Christopher "not to expect the Syrians to move rapidly but by small steps."

Syria's chief of staff declared meanwhile that Damascus will never compromise on its demand that Israel return all the Syrian land it occupies before a peace agreement can be achieved.

General Hikmat Shehadi, a long-time key aide of President Assad, addressing officers and graduates at the military academy in the northern city of Aleppo, stressed: "We will not give up our rights, nor will we compromise on our occupied lands."

His remarks capped several days of hard-line Syrian

statements, mainly through the state-run media, spelling out Syria's position in advance of Mr. Christopher's visit.

At the same time, renewed hostilities have erupted in South Lebanon between guerrillas and Israel.

Earlier Saturday, Syria's state-run newspapers denounced Israeli attacks on South Lebanon, two days after an air raid that killed eight Lebanese civilians and wounded 17.

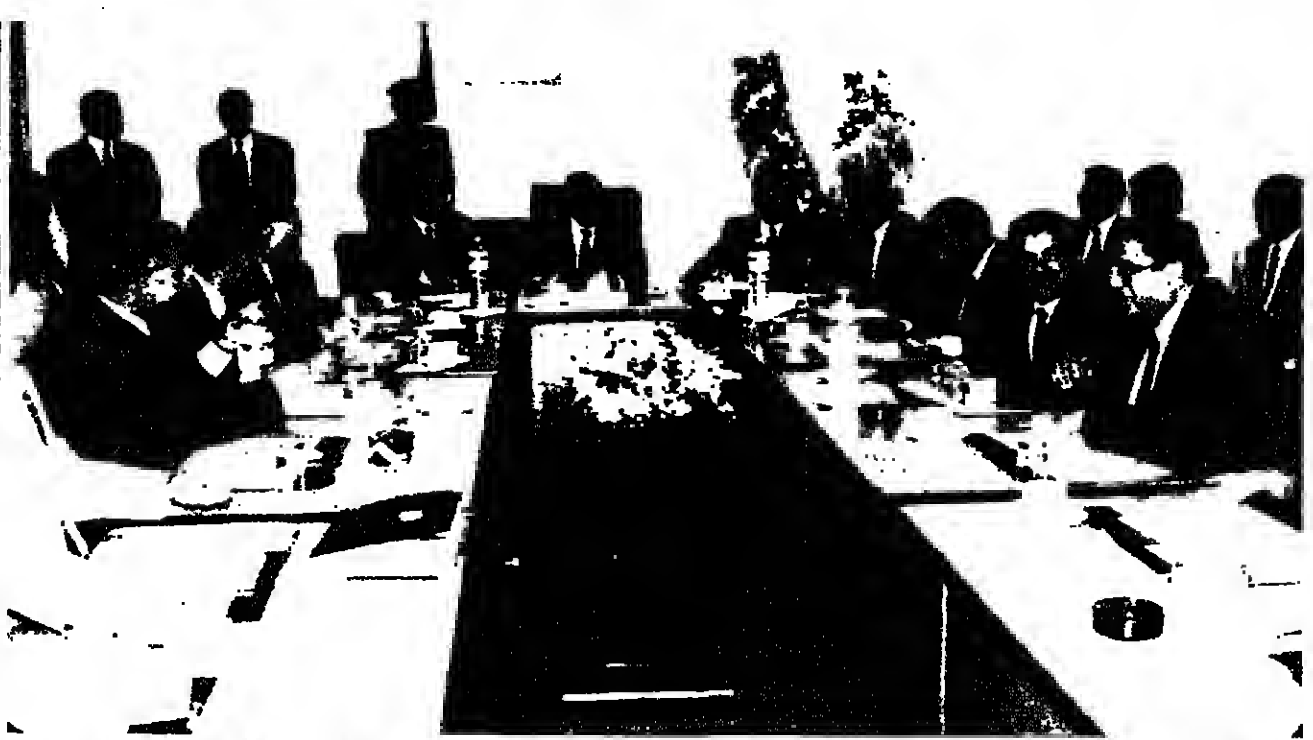
The dailies said the attacks were aimed at sabotaging Mr. Christopher's mission.

Israel has said the civilians were attacked "in error" and apologized. Lebanon maintains the attack was deliberate and has demanded a meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

"Israel's aggression has surprised neither Syria nor Lebanon because of the two countries' conviction that Israel does not want an honorable and just peace," the Tishrin daily wrote.

The newspaper said Israel, through its "brutal aggression," wanted to ruin Mr. Christopher's efforts "so that he finds himself busy with calming down the situation, instead of endeavouring to push the peace process forward."

Violence flared again in the region Saturday (see separate story).



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Saturday chairs a meeting with Jordanian negotiators also attended by Cabinet members (photo by Youssef Al Allan)

Jordan to insist on detailed talks on water and land

Anani reports Israel pumping water to Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian negotiators will insist on detailed discussions of all issues listed in the common agenda signed between Jordan and Israel with particular emphasis on the Kingdom's territorial and water rights in negotiations with the Jewish state starting this week, officials said Saturday.

Information Minister Jawad Al Anani also welcomed as a "positive initiative in the right direction" an Israeli move to pump Jordan River water to Jordanian territory in the Jordan Valley to meet an urgent need of the area.

Dr. Anani said Israel started the pumping on Thursday. He declined to provide details of the quantity pumped.

One of Jordan's key demands in its negotiations with Israel is for a fair share of the waters of the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers. In talks held last month, Israel agreed to address the issue in loose terms, but Jordanian delegates have said that they would press the Jewish state in upcoming negotiating.

Speaking to the press after Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali held a meeting with the negotiating team at the Foreign Ministry, Dr. Anani and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan said Dr. Majali stressed the need to uphold Jordan's principled stand on all issues under discussion towards achieving the Kingdom's full rights and exercises sovereignty in all of its soil.

Mr. Hassan said that dur-

2 Israeli soldiers killed in South Lebanon ambush

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Lebanese guerrillas killed two Israeli soldiers and wounded three others in rocket attacks Saturday to avenge a deadly Israeli air raid as new peace moves got underway in the Middle East.

The spiraling hostilities in South Lebanon sharpened tension on the last hot Arab-Israeli war front as U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in the region seeking to restart stalled peace talks between Israel and Syria.

Israel's deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur, speaking after the rocket attacks, urged Syria to work with Israel to calm tension in South Lebanon and break the five-month-old negotiating stalemate.

But he warned that Israel will continue to respond with military force to attacks by Hizbollah (Party of God), which like its mentor Iran rejects the peace process.

Security forces said Israel blasted its forces in southern Lebanon after the latest clashes.

It was the second time Israel had reinforced its units in the area within two weeks.

An operation unit, six field artillery guns, three jeeps and four troop carriers arrived from northern Israel in Marjayoun, the headquarters of both the Israeli army and its proxy militia the South Lebanon Army (SLA) in Israel's self-declared "security zone."

Other unspecified reinforcements were sent to Israeli army positions in Rihm and Aishiyeh in the north of the self-declared zone controlled in principle by the SLA.

Six days after the Buenos Aires bombing of a Jewish charity killed at least 100 people on July 18, Israel had boosted its forces in southern Lebanon only some of which were withdrawn on July 30.

The reinforcements came only hours after Hizbollah had ambushed an Israeli patrol firing anti-tank rockets and automatic weapons. A second patrol, also in the Aishiyeh sector of the zone, was attacked with explosives, it said.

The Israeli army said the ambush claimed the lives of two soldiers and wounded two others. The SLA said at least 10 Katyusha rockets hit Galilee in northern Israel. Three Israelis were wounded in the attacks.

A another wave of Katyushas also targeted Marjayoun.

Israeli heavy artillery hit back with bombardments of areas north of the zone, security officials in the region said, without reporting casualties.

The escalation of violence in the area came after eight civilians were killed in an Israeli air strike on Thursday, in what Israel admitted was a mistake.

Heavy fighting raged for several hours after Saturday's ambush with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades, preventing Israeli helicopters from evacuating casualties, the sources reported.

The guerrillas fired 12 Katyusha rockets into the zone and near the Israeli coastal camping village of Mshav Lehman, four kilometres south of the border.

Three children in a house that was hit were slightly wounded by flying glass.

Some of the rockets crashed harmlessly near the headquarters of Aotone Lahd, commander of the SLA.

Hizbollah said its guerrillas carried out the attacks to avenge Thursday's Israeli air strike on the village of Deir Zahran.

The dead in the above included two small children, seventeen other Lebanese were wounded.

Hizbollah warned Saturday that any Israeli "foolhardiness" in south Lebanon against civilians would entail "grave consequences."

Security sources said another Hizbollah squad attacked seven SLA posts around Arab Saleem as the ambush was underway. The Israelis reported taking rocket and mortar fire.

No SLA casualties were reported. But three Lebanese civilians were slightly wounded when a rocket exploded

near them northeast of Arab Saleem.

Israeli and SLA militiamen retaliated by shelling a cluster of villages facing the zone with more than 300 rounds from howitzers, the sources said. No casualties were reported.

The sources said Israeli helicopters strafed suspected guerrilla infiltration trails in the wooded hills of Iqim Al Tufah, a Hizbollah stronghold.

South Lebanon usually heats up when peace efforts gather momentum.

When Mr. Christopher was about to visit the Middle East in July 1993, Hizbollah killed several Israeli soldiers, triggering a week-long air, sea and artillery blitz.

Nearly 150 people were killed and 500 wounded before a Christopher-brokered ceasefire halted the bloodletting on the understanding Hizbollah would stop rocketing Israel.

It remains to be seen whether Israel will view the latest Katyusha attacks as a breach of that tacit agreement. But it usually retaliates when its soldiers are killed.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri Saturday discussed the situation with Trond Furuboude, commander of the U.N. peacekeeping force in South Lebanon whose operational zone overlaps the Israeli-occupied sector.

Asked by reporters why the 5,200-strong U.N. force does not block Israeli attacks, the Norwegian general said: "We can't say as peacekeeping forces that we can fight back against such actions. We don't have the resources to stop these acts."

Lebanon is seeking a U.N. Security Council debate on the Deir Al Zahran attack, the bloodiest Israeli air raid in Lebanon since a June 2 strike on a Hizbollah base that killed up to 50 people.

A fundamentalist group warned Saturday it would hit Jewish targets around the world, creating "rivers of blood," if Israel kept up its attack on Lebanon.

An anonymous telephone caller to AFP also renewed a



Relatives of eight civilians killed Thursday in an Israeli air raid remove the rubbles in the ruins of the missile fired three-storey house, in Deir Al Zahran, South Lebanon (AFP photo)

'Iraq could be part of Mideast peace process'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Information Minister Jawad Al Anani said Saturday Iraq could be part of the Middle East peace process by joining the multilateral phase of the Arab-Israeli negotiations but it was up to Israel and Iraq to decide the issue.

"I think Iraq can play an important role, particularly that it was Israel which has been referring to Iraq in the context of regional security," Dr. Anani told the Jordan Times. "Every time the issue of security comes up Israel mentions Iraq."

It appeared to be a reference to Israel's assertions that Iraq and Iran were also developing nuclear weapons, while addressing the question of its own nuclear arsenal.

Asked whether Jordan would play any role in bringing Iraq into the Arab-Israeli peace process, Dr. Anani said: "There cannot be an answer to that question purely on its merits. It is a complex question."

"However, we should address the question to Israel if they want Iraq to be involved in the multilateral negotiations on issues like security," Dr. Anani told the Jordan Times.

Dr. Anani was also interviewed by Israel Radio on a possible role for Iraq in the peace process. The minister gave a similar comment and added:

"There are also issues like economic cooperation and water. However, we'll have to wait and see if Iraq will take such a decision."

Iraq meanwhile denied an Israeli newspaper report that it had secretly contacted Israel with a view to using the Jewish state as a conduit to Washington.

Israel's Yediot Aharanot daily said Friday that an Iraqi defence official had met with Israeli officials in Europe last month and proposed a package involving Baghdad's dropping of all territorial claims vis-a-vis Kuwait and cooperating in the peace process in return for an end to the international sanctions

against Iraq.

"The report is fabricated, groundless and untrue," said a statement issued by the Iraqi embassy in Amman. "There was no such meeting, whether a month ago or anytime else."

According to the Yediot Aharanot report, which did not identify any of the officials involved, Iraq proposed that Baghdad would publicly declare that it had no territorial claims in Kuwait and accept the Arab-Israeli peace process in return for Washington's agreement to end the four-year-old international sanctions.

The report also said that Iraq was willing to welcome the Jordanian-Israeli peace moves, sell oil to Israel and open mutual diplomatic interest offices.

It was not the first time the Israeli media had reported alleged secret contacts between Iraq and Israel after the Gulf war, during which Iraq fired nearly 40 Scud missiles at the Jewish state.

Arafat secures American backing on need for funds

ALEXANDRIA (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat got the backing of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Saturday for the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) plea that donor nations come forward quickly with development money.

But Mr. Christopher also said after a meeting with Mr. Arafat that he urged the PLO chairman to meet donors' demands to show the Palestinians would account fully for funds donated to develop the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

Mr. Christopher was here to meet President Hsni Moharak at the start of another U.S. Middle East peace shuttle. He also met with Mr. Arafat since the PLO leader also was holding talks with Mr. Moharak.

Mr. Arafat did not talk to reporters after the meeting, skipping the brief news conference that Mr. Christopher and Mr. Mubarak held.

The U.S. secretary said the meeting with Mr. Arafat concentrated on the slowness of donor money arriving for the Palestinian self-rule zones in Gaza and Jericho set up under a PLO-Israeli agreement signed in Cairo last May.

Mr. Christopher noted that he already sent a letter to donor countries on Friday urging them to speed their aid.

"I emphasised the fact that my trip to Gaza demonstrated to me that time is of the essence," Mr. Christopher said. "It's important that there are projects on the ground."

He also noted in his letter that the United States was financing a housing project and urged other donors to follow his example, Mr. Christopher said.

He also noted that he urged Mr. Arafat to meet demands for documenting the Palestinians were developing a system of accountability for the aid. He said Mr. Arafat was "very forthcoming" on the issue.

Donor states have promised some \$2.4 billion to help the Palestinians, but the money has been slow to arrive since the donors want assurances of how it will be used.

Mr. Christopher, whose trip is concentrating on pushing forward Syrian-Israeli peace talks, said he had talked with Mr. Moharak about the Egyptian leader's recent meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Syrian President Hafez Assad.

Mr. Christopher also noted that Mr. Arafat raised some issues about the Israelis that he had also talked about with Mr. Moharak. Aides had said in advance that the PLO leader would bring up what he regarded as delays in Israel's implementation of the autonomy agreement.

Without going into the PLO's problems with Israel, Mr. Christopher said the United States would be helpful on the issue "if we can."

Nabil Shaath, the chief Palestinian peace negotiator who was accompanying Mr. Arafat, said in advance that the focus of the talks with Mr. Mubarak would be slow in implementing the autonomy agreement for Gaza and Jericho.

"Until now the way the agreement has been implemented is very disappointing," Dr. Shaath said.

On Friday, Mr. Arafat complained bitterly that Israel still had not accepted an arrangement for Palestinians to pass back and forth between the two self-rule zones and that Palestinian products were being blocked from Israel.

Mr. Arafat accused Mr. Rabin of not actively pushing to implement autonomy for the Palestinians.

"I hold Rabin responsible for the delays and obstacles in implementing the agreement," Mr. Arafat said during a meeting in Gaza with Israeli Arab members of Mr. Rabin's Labour Party.

No Israeli-Syrian peace without direct talks — U.S.

SHANNON AIRPORT, Ireland (Agencies) — Israel and Syria will never make peace without returning to direct negotiations but for now the U.S. mediation role is critical, a senior U.S. official said Friday.

The official, travelling with Secretary of State Warren Christopher on his latest Middle East peace mission, said that while Israel and Syria are now seriously engaged in the detailed negotiations on the Golan Heights, "wide gaps" remain in their positions and it is unclear how soon peace might be achieved.

But both sides agree that if Washington ended its current efforts to carry and explain proposals between Israel and Syria, forward movement in the peace process would come to a halt, said the official, briefing reporters on Mr. Christopher's plane on condition of anonymity.

Mr. Christopher ended a Middle East peace mission only two weeks ago. He decided to return there because "we saw on the last trip a move... into more engagement on the substance (between Israel and Syria) and we were not really keen at letting a long time go by" before continuing those talks, the official said.

"We want to cement and create deeper roots for those kinds of discussions so that we don't have other factors intrude on that which would make it more difficult to try to make headway."

Mr. Christopher's U.S. Air Force jet refuelled at Shannon Airport, Ireland, before travelling on to Alexandria, Egypt, where he was to meet President Hosni Mubarak on Saturday.

Mr. Mubarak recently met Syrian President Hafez Al

Assad, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Christopher wants to "compare notes" on peace efforts.

He then visits Israel and Syria. Also, hoping to boost the Israel-Jordan declaration signed in Washington on July 25, Mr. Christopher will participate in ceremonies marking a new border crossing between Israel and Jordan. The crossing is between the Red Sea port towns of Eilat and Aqaba.

Whether Mr. Christopher meets Mr. Arafat on this swing through the region is unknown at this point, U.S. officials said.

Mr. Christopher's mission is to try to draw Syria further into the momentum for overall peace and cement progress made between Israel and Jordan and Israel and the Palestinians.

Mr. Christopher, speaking to radio reporters on Thursday, cited what he called new signs that President Assad is serious about peace with Israel, although he predicted no immediate breakthroughs.

The senior official who briefed reporters on the plane, however, said Israeli-Syrian negotiations are "going to be a long process... painstaking."

"There can be no deal if it is not done directly" between Israel and Syria, he said. But he stressed if Israel and Syria, now resumed face-to-face talks suspended in February, "you would not have an effort to close gaps."

President Clinton has said he hopes the two sides could achieve a breakthrough by the end of 1994. But the senior official said he could not predict when progress

might occur. He believes Mr. Assad would reject a partial accord with Israel and opt for "details hammered out in advance."

Mr. Christopher also plans to ask Mr. Assad again to try to curb the pro-Iranian Hizbollah group that is suspected of involvement in recent bombings against Jewish targets.

"Syria does not control Hizbollah (but they) do operate from places in Lebanon and Syria has demonstrated from time to time an ability to affect their behaviour," an official said.

Mr. Christopher said Thursday: "The main thing we're doing now is to facilitate the negotiation by carrying messages back and forth between the parties and helping the parties to probe for the grounds of agreement."

"The issues are tough and they're intertwined and interrelated. These are the issues of what constitutes a normalisation, what constitutes peace, how the withdrawal shall come about, what security measures are necessary. And I think the United States can play a role by helping the parties probe what the possibilities are and what the combinations of putting together the various elements of peace are."

"The parties at the present time are not prepared to meet directly at the level of heads of government and have asked me to play this role with them. So it's a facilitative role, but I think also the United States is bringing to it the experience we've had from prior peace negotiations of helping the party to break deadlocks, bring stalemates to an end and move the process forward."



FUNERAL: Relatives of the eight Lebanese civilians killed Thursday in an Israeli air raid on a three-storey house in Deir Al Zahrani carry five of the coffins during the funeral

ceremonies Friday in the southern Lebanon village (AFP photo)

Iranian riot city returning to normal

TEHRAN (R) — Life in the Iranian city of Qazvin, hit by riots this week, was returning to normal on Saturday with most shops and offices open, local journalists said.

The reporters, contacted by telephone from Tehran, said police patrols could be seen from time to time in the city but the state of siege imposed by police on Friday appeared to have been lifted.

"You can see police patrols come and go in the streets but the unrest seems to be over," one said.

Officials on Friday said four banks and 12 shops were ransacked and 20 people detained since the riots erupted on Wednesday over the city's demand to become a province. Ten of those arrested were later released.

The protests began after the Iranian parliament voted narrowly against separating Qazvin from Zanjan province.

"Qazvin people I have met seemed to be happy with the news that their city is to merge with Tehran province," another journalist said. The government on Thursday partially bowed to the demands of the people of Qazvin by separating it from Zanjan and joining it with Tehran province.

Until now Qazvin, 150 kilometres northwest of Tehran, has had to conduct its official business with Tehran through the city of Zanjan. Its funds from the central government also had to pass through Zanjan.

Joining Tehran provides better access to the capital, but falls short of becoming an independent province.

Saudi jewel affair turns thriller

BANGKOK (AFP) — The theft of a fortune in Saudi jewels has taken a sinister new twist with a bloody double-murder amid allegations that senior police officials are implicated in the affair.

The murderous twist came with the slayings this week of the wife and teenage son of a key witness in the case, which began five years ago when jewelry worth \$20 million was stolen from the home of a prince in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi charge d'affaires in Bangkok, Mohammad Said Khoja, has worked for four years to recover the jewels — stolen in 1989 by a Thai servant — and has led a crusade to punish those responsible and their accomplices.

"This time, they cannot cover up," Mr. Khoja told AFP Friday. But he added that in Thailand "everything is possible."

The 34-year-old wife and 14-year-old son of wealthy jeweler Sant Sritthanakarn were found murdered Monday in their luxury car on a highway some 100 kilometres north of Bangkok in Saraburi province.

Mr. Santi, who had dropped out of sight before the murders, failed to attend their funeral Thursday. Arrested and interrogated in the Saudi gems case, he is considered a key state witness.

"Santi had bought the jewels from two police generals. He was about to mention their name in his testimony. That's why he's so afraid, and he's still hiding," Mr. Khoja said, adding: "Behind the killers, there are very, very big people."

Some of Thailand's most senior police officials are suspected of possible involvement in the controversial affair.

The former police chief until last January, General Sawasdi Amornvivat, and his deputy, Gen. Sanong Watanawarankoon, have been given until the end of the month to surrender for questioning over their roles in the case.

As a senator in Thailand's upper house, the former police director-general is protected by parliamentary immunity until the current session ends later this month. He has not yet responded to the summons.

"If they don't surrender, I will catch them myself," the new police chief, Gen. Pratin Santaprap, said recently. Among the eight people already charged in connection with the case are seven police officers, including Gen. Chaler Kerdthet, who is still on active duty.

The Saudi authorities were infuriated when in 1991, after the capture of the thief, not all the gems were returned and much of what was given back turned out to be crude fakes, with many of the best pieces having vanished.

The thief, sentenced to five years in jail in Thailand, was freed after two years and seven months.

Police suspect Santi disposed of some of the jewelry through his Bangkok shop. Thai press reports quoted unidentified sources involved in the investigation as saying that several high-ranking police officials had divided the jewels up among themselves and their subordinates and were helped by jewelers.

Two weeks before the slaying of Mr. Santi's wife and son, they were kidnapped and released. Mr. Santi himself had been abducted for three days not long after being threatened in an attempt to prevent him from revealing the names of the big-ranking police officials involved, press reports said.

The new police chief has committed himself to wrapping up the investigation before he retires in September. Saudi Arabia sees this as a condition that must be fulfilled before it lifts sanctions it has imposed on Thailand. These include a ban on visas for Thai workers, who formerly sent significant amounts of money home from Saudi Arabia, and a downgrading of the Saudi embassy in Bangkok.

Food starts arriving for Rwandans

(Continued from page 12) gar, Khan, said that an interim assessment by a team of human rights observers sent to probe media reports of harassment had found "no evidence of a pattern," but admitted "there may have been some incidents."

Evoking the horrors of the three-month civil war in Rwanda, Mr. Khan commented: "Given the degree of bloodshed and massacres (that took place), I think it's to be expected that some incidents might happen."

'No reinstatement of Jawara'

(Continued from page 12)

any foreign body, this was purely internal," he said. Political analysts in Senegal have suggested President Abdou Diouf might have been glad to see the back of Mr. Jawara, whom he blamed for the collapse of the Senegambia federation in 1989.

Col. Sallaby said they had good relations with Senegal, which surrounds Gambia on three sides. Nigeria provided the commander of the Gambian army under a 1992 defence pact but the government appointed a Gambian to the post a few days ago.

Lt. Sallaby said Gambia remained committed to the defence pact and wanted 70 Nigerian military advisers to stay on. "That's what they are there for, we still need them," he said.

Lt. Sallaby said he and Sierra Leone's head of state Captain Valentine Strasser had found they had a lot in common. "We are both soldiers," he said.

Ghana, where Jerry Rawlings made the transition from military leader to elected civilian president, is now the only former British colony in West Africa with a civilian government.

The source said secessionists flew most of the warplanes they had to Djibouti. "They are starting to come back," he said but declined to give figures.

He added that six naval vessels which had fled to Oman had also returned to Yemen. Three helicopters still in Oman were expected back shortly.

The Defence Ministry said on Wednesday that 5,500 Yemenis had returned to Yemen. The official source said they came from the border area with Oman and included 4,020 soldiers and their weapons. He named Colonel Saleh Ali, commander of the eastern front and his staff, as one of the returnees.

Other flights (Terminal 2) 05:15 ... Anatolia (TK) 07:20 ... Rome (AZ) 14:30 ... Doha, Muscat (GF) 16:05 ... Moscow (SU) 19:25 ... Larnaca (CY) 21:15 ... Cairo (MS) 02:25 ... Amsterdam (KL)

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Reporter's firing heightens concerns about freedom

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Jerusalem's only Arabic newspaper announced that it will no longer publish the work of a veteran Palestinian journalist, raising fears that the new self-rule government will not tolerate dissent.

Al Quds said on its front page Friday that Daoud Kuttab's offence was organising a petition urging Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to lift his week-old ban on the Al Nahar daily.

The action followed the temporary detention of a Muslim fundamentalist reporter for "incitement against the Palestinian National Authority" for his criticism of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace process. He was released after three weeks.

"I understand the pressures on the new government," Mr. Kuttab, 39, told the Associated Press. "It is easier to tolerate freedom of expression when you are strong."

But Mr. Kuttab, an Arafat backer who wrote for Al Quds for seven years, said he had done nothing to warrant dismissal. "I am not against Arafat or Arafat," he said. "But they are wrong, and maybe they have to learn the hard way."

Mr. Arafat's spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdeineh, declined to discuss the situation, saying it was a "personal matter" between Al Quds

and Mr. Kuttab.

Mr. Arafat and his aides insist the PLO government in the Gaza Strip and Jericho guarantees freedoms of speech, press and assembly. The PLO complained loudly when Israel censored the Arabic press during the Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule.

Now, the Palestinian press debate is headline news on Israeli Hebrew, Arabic and English radio stations and newspapers — outlets that Palestinians can readily turn to if they find their own press too muzzled.

Moderate Palestinians have scheduled weekend strategy sessions on how to challenge the decisions by the PLO government.

The Muslim fundamentalist Hamas, which opposes the peace process, planned a sit-in Saturday outside the Gaza City municipal council "to demand our rights," including open elections and a free press. The group is irate that only Arafat loyalists were given seats on the new council.

Hamas also criticised the Palestinian authority's three-week detention of Hani Abed, a supporter of the fundamentalist Islamic Jihad movement who was accused of "incitement" for dispatches critical of the peace process.

PLO security officials last week barred Al Nahar from being distributed in Gaza and

Jericho, accusing it of operating without a licence and downplaying government press statements.

Many saw the move as an attempt by the PLO to retaliate for the July 25 Jordan-Israel declaration.

On the Al Nahar issue, Mr. Rdeineh reiterated that "any newspaper can publish if it obtains a legal licence," but suggested that Al Nahar would not qualify.

"A newspaper has to be a Palestinian newspaper, not related to any other place in the world," Mr. Abu Rdeineh said.

Staffers at both Al Quds and Al Nahar said their publishers would not be available to comment.

Reuter adds: Palestinian journalists gathered in the West Bank town of Ramallah on Saturday to discuss ways to fight the restrictions on their freedom by the Palestinian authority.

Journalists at the meeting said after years of fighting, Israeli oppression and censorship, they now had to defend themselves against a crackdown by the Palestinian authority.

"I think the more unified Palestinian journalists are, the more effective we will be in deterring the authorities and publishers from interfering in freedom of the press," said Mr. Kuttab.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 ... Fontaines on Heritage
18:30 ... News in French
18:45 ... Faulty Fax Review
19:00 ... News in Hebrew
20:30 ... News in Arabic
20:30 ... Catch
21:10 ... Stolen Lives
22:40 ... News in English
22:50 ... The House of Eliot

PRAYER TIMES

04:23 ... Fajr
05:49 ... (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:41 ... Dhuhr
16:22 ... Asr
19:34 ... Maghreb
21:01 ... Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swirelli, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Transfiguration Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630831, Tel. 626543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675891
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Normal summer weather conditions will prevail with winds north-westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman ... 18/31
Aqaba ... 25/39
Deserts ... 16/35
Jordan Valley ... 22/38
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 30, Aqaba 38 Humidity readings: Amman 22 per cent, Aqaba 22 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Sa'ad Ali ... 788285
Dr. Arafat Ashbah ... 625207
Dr. Jassim Al Asmar ... 890540
Dr. Nidal As'ad ... 751672
Firdos pharmacy ... 661912
Firdos pharmacy ... 778336
Al Asma pharmacy ... 637055
Naroukh pharmacy ... 626762
Al Salam pharmacy ... 636730
Yacoub pharmacy ... 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy ... 637640
Naroukh pharmacy ... 623872
Najib pharmacy ... 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Omeri ... 272032
Alquds pharmacy ... (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi ... 899601
Khalil pharmacy ... 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ... 637111
Civil Defence Department ... 661111
Civil Defence immediate ... 6442816
Rescue ... 630341

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalil Maternity, J. Amn. 6442816
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn.

Civil Defence Emergency ... 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade ... 617101
Blood Bank ... 775121
Highway Police ... 834302
Traffic Police ... 896390
Public Security Department ... 630321
Hotel Complaints ... 605800
Price Complaints ... 661176
Water and Sewerage ... 897467
Complaints ... 774111
Amman Municipality ... 787111
Complaints ... 630321
Telephone Information ... 121
(directory assistance) ... 010230
Central Amman Telephone ... 623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs ... 661101
Jordan Television ... 771111
Radio Jordan ... 774111
Water Authority ... 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority ... 815615

Electric Power ... 636381
Company ... 08-53200
RJ Flight Information ... 08-53200
Queen Aja Intl. Airport ... 08-53200

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalil Maternity, J. Amn. 6442816
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn.

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)33200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:30 ... Bangkok (RJ)
09:00 ... Damascus (RJ)
09:45 ... Frankfurt (LH)
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Other Flights (Terminal 2)
04:20 ... Anatolia (TK)
13:30 ... Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
04:20 ... Anatolia (TK)
13:30 ... Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)

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King receives cables of support

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday received cables of support and appreciation for his latest steps directed at achieving peace in the region.

The King received a joint cable from the leaders and members of the Union of Welfare Societies and voluntary centres in Zarqa, expressing their total support for King Hussein's brave step towards securing peace in the region and his endeavours to build a modern Jordan.

The cable added that although the path of peace is difficult, it is the one which the people of Jordan have chosen with King Hussein, and it is the right one. The cable said that "with the wise leadership of His Majesty and his ability to handle critical issues, the region shall enjoy the security and stability it deserves."

King Hussein also received a similar cable from the Arab Youth Forum/Zarqa Branch, expressing support for his "brave and sincere steps to lead Jordan and the Arab and Islamic nations to peace, security and prosperity in the region, which has suffered long enough."

Premier receives cables

Prime Minister Abdol Salam Majali also received



several cables of support and appreciation for King Hussein's moves to arrive at a just, durable and comprehensive peace.

The prime minister received a cable from the Student Council of the Physical Education Faculty at the University of Jordan expressing its full support for the recent steps aimed at regaining Jordanian national rights and reaching just and honourable peace in the Middle East.

The students said these moves are "blessed and great efforts stemming from a sincere sense of belonging and loyalty to this homeland and its people."

The cable said that King Hussein chose Dr. Majali to lead this battle for peace because "His Majesty saw in you a loyal man that can overcome obstacles and face up to unwelcome currents."

It added that this courageous step brought Jordan back into the lead in the international arena and put an end

to some attempts to push the Kingdom into the margins.

The prime minister also received several cables from foreign ministers supporting the Washington Declaration signed between King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and appreciating the step towards establishing just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The cables came from the foreign ministers of Canada, Brazil and Italy.

Rural area teachers learn how to help students with special needs

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — For 23 days, 60 teachers from different parts of the Kingdom are attending a training seminar on pre-school stages education and special needs associated with it.

The training, which started on Aug. 1, concentrates on teachers in rural areas and methods to assist students with special needs.

The trainees are being instructed by Christine Meleady-Dewick and Anne D'Aquila, two volunteers invited by Al Zahra' Welfare Society for Children (ZWSCC). Both women are children service directors and work at the Sheffield Children's Centre (SCC) in England.

"We are providing a programme of training that incorporates an early years training programme and special needs programmes," Ms. Meleady-Dewick said.

She told the Jordan Times that the course is targeted for teachers,

occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers.

"We are hoping to raise teachers' awareness of children with disabilities such as hearing, vision or speaking problems," said Ms. Meleady-Dewick.

She said many children have other needs that are not acknowledged by teachers. These needs, she explained, stem from problems related to emotional disturbances, injuries sustained since birth or child abuse.

"We want to highlight other students' abilities, and encourage the educators to use learning objectives and programmes to extend students' abilities," Ms. D'Aquila said.

The training programme will focus on "learning through playing," which, according to Ms. D'Aquila, combines both theoretical and practical applications which are designed to enhance participants' knowledge, skills and confidence.

"Play is an essential component in the lives and de-

velopment of children and its benefit should never be underestimated. Play is central to the physical, social, intellectual, emotional, creative and recreational life of each child," she said.

According to Ms. D'Aquila, research has shown that play is universal and that all learning is based upon past experiences.

As a result, she said, "different perspectives have been brought to bear on the subject, the majority purporting that play is vital to the acquisition of knowledge and to well-being of the human race."

Ms. Meleady-Dewick said the methods used in the play theory aim at facilitating and encouraging play opportunities and experiences through active exploration and discovery in a play environment so that children will be able to make sense of their world.

The SCC is a comprehensive child service that operates nationally in Britain. The centre also works internationally providing

direct services as well as consulting and training services to Italy, Ireland, Pakistan, the United States, Spain, Brazil and Jordan.

Hanna Kurdi, president of the ZWSCC, said the SCC and the ZWSCC are currently "establishing a range of provisions in the southern areas of Jordan, as well as a training programme for early years in education and special needs."

According to Ms. Kurdi, ZWSCC, established in 1987, aims at providing comprehensive care and support for children and their families who are suffering from the effects of severe poverty and deprivation in the Kingdom.

"We are trying to serve all students with special needs in rural areas because we feel that they lack such services," Ms. Kurdi said.

"We are also concentrating on training teachers in rural areas because they are in direct contact with these children," she said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Basma tours Mafrag

MAFRAQ (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday toured Mafrag Governorate and the northern Mafrag region. Citizens in the two areas who received the Princess voiced their allegiance to the Hashemite leadership and support for His Majesty King Hussein's moves aimed at achieving a just, lasting and honourable peace in the region and regaining Jordanian rights. The citizens expressed their readiness to offer sacrifices to maintain national unity and voiced joy over the return of the King after his successful mission on the road to peace. At Mafrag School, Princess Basma opened a wool dyeing centre established by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development with the objectives of increasing the incomes of families benefiting from its services.

Transport delegation to head for Romania

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary General of the Ministry of Transport Awarad Tell Sunday will leave Amman for Bucharest at the head of a delegation that is scheduled to hold talks with Romanian officials on means of facilitating the transit of Jordanian trucks through Romanian territory. The talks will also deal with activating an agreement signed between the Jordanian and Romanian governments in 1975 concerning the transport of passengers and goods between the two countries. The delegation includes representatives of the ministries of Finance, Interior and Transport in addition to a representative of the private sector.

Land department collects JD 5.5m

AMMAN (Petra) — The Land and Survey Department has collected JD 5,486,590 in revenues July, reflecting an increase of seven per cent over the previous month, according to Department Director General Ali Gharaibeh. Mr. Gharaibeh said last month's revenues witnessed a drop of 17 per cent compared to the same period last year when the department collected JD 6,588,888 in revenues.

CDD responds to 518 emergencies

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Defence Department (CDD) last week dealt with 518 incidents in various parts of the Kingdom, according to CDD Director of Public Relations Captain Abdul Raouf Ma'ayyah. Of the total number, he said, the department responded to 61 fires, 452 other emergencies in which 13 people died.

Karak fortress renovation finished

KARAK (Petra) — The Antiquities Department has completed maintenance and renovation works at the Karak fortress, according to Karak antiquities inspector Hakem Al Mahameed. Mr. Mahameed said the two-month renovation works included restoring facades, walls, towers and vaults. He said the church and the mill areas were also restored.

S. African T.V. airs Jordan democracy

PRETORIA (Petra) — South African Television screened a documentary on Jordan on the occasion of opening the Kingdom's embassy in Pretoria. The film featured the scenic attractions of Amman, Jerash, Wadi Rum, Petra, the Dead Sea and Aqaba, and the services and facilities offered to tourists.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FUHEIS FIFTH FESTIVAL

* Concert by Taffeh, Ma'an, and Azraq musical bands at 21:00.

FILM

* Film entitled "Trois" at the American Center at 17:00.

DRAMAS

* Monodrama: "Anthology of Martyrdom and Exile" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 20:00.

* Melodrama for children in Arabic entitled "The Children's Garden" at Haya Cultural Centre at 17:30.

CONCERT

* Concert by "The Family International Group" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 20:00.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of water paints by Sudanese artist Abdul Qadir Al Bakhat at Baladina Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598).

* Ceramic exhibition by artist Haider Ra'ouf at the Royal Cultural Centre.

* Jordan Industries Expo at the International Motor Exhibition (Tel. 653854).

* Exhibition entitled "Environmental Technologies: A Travelling Information Centre" at the American Center.

Armed Forces pursue interaction to advance development in all sectors

By Rima Cortbawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — On its third day Saturday, the Second Jordanian Science Week, organised by the Jordanian

Armed Forces in coordination with the Higher Council of Science and Technology (HCST) witnessed the presentation of several working papers including the experience of the armed forces

abroad, the importance of Jordan's geographic position in the development of the country, and discussions on the policies and strategies of the National Document on Science and Technology.

Additional working papers on the extraction of uranium and its use, water treatment, electronic wars and communication systems were presented by experienced engineers from the armed forces.

"The participation of the armed forces, for the first time in the science week, has so far been very constructive, especially considering their major contribution to the advancement of all the sectors of the Kingdom," said Talal Akashch, director of the development sector at the General Secretariat of the HCST.

As well as their continuous efforts to maintain safety and structural stability in all regions of the country, the armed forces help educational institutions, like the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), in providing training to students in any specialised field, in addition to the coordinated research to build a remote-controlled aircraft at the University.

Also the armed forces integrate with Mu'tah University on studies on the use of wind energy systems.

Brigadier General Abdul Wahab Kharabsheh, purchasing manager of the armed forces, said, "our capabilities and our share of educated and well-informed individuals are more than sufficient, even in comparison with the more technically-advanced countries, to enable us to proceed with carefully-planned steps towards development," which is one of the many themes of the science week.

Development, however, as the general said, is not a simple matter that can be accomplished in a limited period of time. It requires the well-timed and appropriately-studied efforts in all sectors, including education, agriculture and industry. The major steps to concentrate on are creating the "right balance" and allowing for the "parallel" development of all institutions, he said.

Third-world countries should not focus on encouraging the growth of certain superficial aspects, but should choose the modification of somewhat hidden factors that are essential for development, according to

Brig. Gen. Kharabsheh. Naturally, he added, education and integration of all institutions are at the top of the list of these factors.

"We should not talk about development in one field separately from the other fields. Each establishment must synchronise its efforts with the other establishments, whether private or governmental, because at the end, all will proceed forward together as one unit," the general maintained.

Preliminary steps towards achieving this are outlined in the science week objectives, foremost among which is the "bridging among all institutions in the Kingdom," which will result in "each getting



Participants to the Second Jordanian Science Week, organised by the Armed Forces in cooperation with the Higher Council for Science and Technology Saturday hold their ninth session (Petra photo)

informed about the others' capabilities."

Brig. Gen. Kharabsheh finally concluded: "As well as brainstorming in our discussions around the document of

science and technology, we are presenting 35 science papers on the subjects that are of great importance in the fields of engineering, medicine, history, environment

and natural resources."

The Second Jordanian Science Week was opened by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan last Wednesday.

Abequa child custody issue may be solved out of court-lawyers

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The child custody issue in the case of Mohammad Abequa, who is suspected of killing his wife Nihal in the U.S. then fleeing to Jordan with their two children, could be solved outside the courts, according to the Jordanian lawyers who are representing the victim's family.

"We are trying to avoid going to court to save time, effort and money, and we are trying to reach a settlement with the Abequa family regarding the children's custody," the lawyers said.

Yacoub Far and Abdullah Khalil were retained by Nancy Feinberg, a U.S. attorney who is representing Meryem Gussal, the mother of the victim. Ms. Feinberg has asked Mr. Far and Mr. Khalil

to represent Mrs. Gussal in the Jordanian court, because Jordanian law prohibits foreign lawyers from appearing in Jordanian courts.

Ms. Feinberg arrived in Jordan Aug. 1, with Nesime Dokur, the victim's sister, Mrs. Dokur's daughter and a New Jersey senator's secretary.

Mr. Far told reporters at a press conference that the only way to regain the child without resorting to court is by having Mr. Abequa sign a document that waives his rights of custody of the children and grants custody to their mother's family.

Mr. Abequa (46) faces charges for killing his wife and kidnapping his two children, Lisa (6) and Samir (3). Ms. Abequa's body was discovered two days later in her New Jersey apartment. Mr.

Abequa was detained by Jordanian authorities on July 20. On July 23, he confessed to murdering his wife.

If Mr. Abequa refuses, the attorney said, the other alternative is to resort to the Sharia Court.

"We hope that the Abequa family will be cooperative with us for the sake of the children," he said.

Mr. Far said he and his associate believed that the Abequa family was willing to cooperate in this case. The two attorneys said, however, that they were not instructed to contact the Abequa family to discuss the issue.

"We have not been instructed by our clients to contact the Abequa family, or file for custody in courts, and we have not been contacted by a lawyer from their side," said Mr. Far.

According to Mr. Khalil, their client, Ms. Gussal, will be granted custody of the children according to the Personal Status Law applied by the Sharia Court.

"We have been supplied with all the necessary documents and evidence and we are prepared to file all the documents to prove that Ms. Gussal is eligible," they said.

Wesley Egan, the U.S. ambassador in Amman said on Thursday that an administrative solution is possible to the children's custody issue.

He said he will provide the Jordanian authorities with the needed evidence against Mr. Abequa to support the charges of first degree murder and kidnapping.

Mr. Egan said he will press for his extradition despite the lack of an extradition treaty between the two countries.

A taste of the Arab Gulf in song

By Angham Tamimi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — One of the most renowned singers of the Arab Gulf is Ali Abdul Sattar, whose performance last week at the South Theatre caused a human traffic jam at the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts.

Mr. Abdul Sattar, born in Qatar, began singing in 1973 in Cairo during his academic study at the College of Science of Cairo University. During his stay there, he recorded most of his artistic performances.

When he obtained his masters degree in educational information from New York University, the regent of Qatar exempted him from the requirement that he return to his country to fulfill his obligation in his field of study, thus freeing him to devote himself to his art.

Mr. Abdul Sattar was the first Arab artist to sing at the Cairo Opera House in 1989. The artist represented Qatar in many Arab and international festivals including in London, Paris, Damascus, Geneva, Madrid, as well as Cairo.

At a press conference last week in Amman, Mr. Abdul Sattar told journalists that throughout his career he con-

centrated mainly on the rich Arab culture to produce his works.

"The Arab culture is a must for the true artist. It is a rich well for us," said Mr. Abdul Sattar. "The Qatari government has recently established a centre for culture and cultural research from which any artist can borrow raw material to serve and enrich his ideas or his subject matter."

The vocalist's interest in education was the motivation behind his idea to simplify the learning of Arabic grammar through music.

"Cooperating with Qatari Educational TV, I composed one experimental episode about the 'Subject'. It was highly successful, but such a project of 120 episodes, needs financing," said Mr. Abdul Sattar.

At the Jerash Festival the artist sang to childhood, to his country, and to humanity. His songs almost reflected his style. He seemed to prefer fast tunes. In his approach, he tries to "talk to all generations, but keeping in mind particular restrictions," said the artist.

"I usually get in touch with young composers in order to walk alongside with today's listeners' tastes. I intend to pursue my work but this cannot be achieved without



Qatar's Ali Abdul Sattar delights audiences at the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts (Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

cooperating with the new generation. Still at the same time, I do not neglect my own style," said Mr. Abdul Sattar.

He thanked the Jerash Festival organisers for giving him the opportunity to present not only the Qatari art, but

the Gulf art as well. "With the audience's encouragement at the South Theatre, I was able to introduce a complete picture of my old and new songs. In addition I presented a kind of survey of Gulf songs through my various rhythms and styles."

Havana waterfront sealed off after worst anti-government riots

HAVANA (AFP) — Pro-government militia sealed off the Havana waterfront Saturday after thousands of Cubans clashed with police in unprecedented demonstrations against Fidel Castro's hold-out Communist regime.

The riots erupted Friday after several thousand people crowded into a slum area near the entrance to Havana Bay on news that Cubans trying to flee to the United States had hijacked a ferry Thursday for the third time in 10 days.

Neither officials nor the

press reported the number of casualties or arrests during the two hours of violence, during which witnesses said police opened fire on demonstrators who hurled rocks at them and several hundred protesters marched down a main street chanting "Freedom! Freedom!"

It was the first time the Cuban capital had witnessed such violence since the Castro regime took power 35 years ago.

Unlike past incidents, demonstrators attacked police when they tried to clear out

the waterfront area and smashed windows in central Havana and the old town instead of obeying orders to disperse, witnesses said.

Pro-Castro militants rushed to the scene to aid police and stayed to applaud Castro when he turned up later the protest site.

Late Friday, Castro went on television and threatened to allow a mass exodus of Cubans to the United States.

A similar move in 1980 led to the arrival of 120,000 Cubans in the United States in a few months.

He accused "anti-social elements" and "delinquents" — part of "the fifth column of American imperialism" — of staging the violence.

Washington, which has been trying to limit immigration from all parts of the world, expressed "deep concern" about the threat.

"The U.S. has stated repeatedly that we will not permit Fidel Castro to dictate our immigration policy or to create a replay of the Mariel boatlift," the State Department said in a statement, referring to the Cuban emigration wave of 1980.

"We... urge the Cuban

government to carefully consider all the implications of such incitement," the statement added.

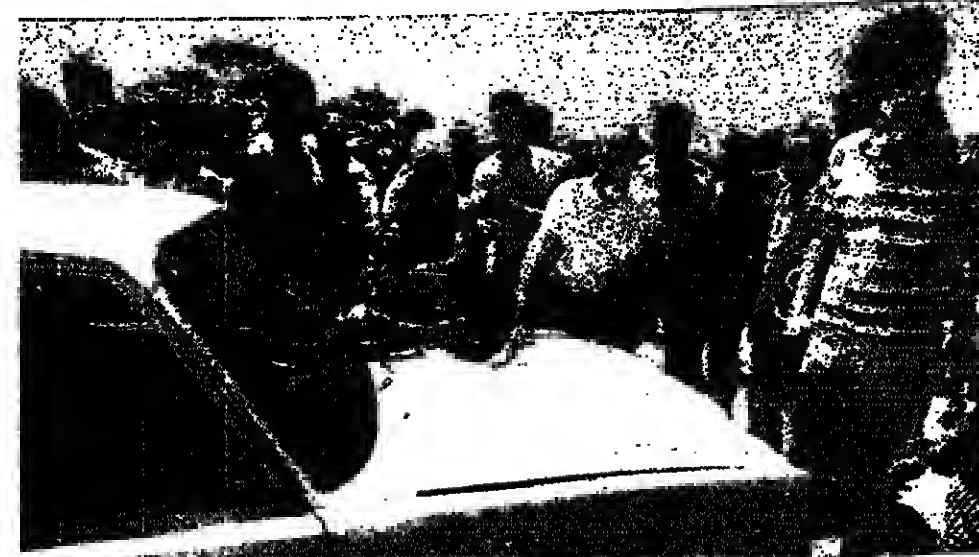
Early Saturday, militias closed off Malecon Boulevard along the Havana waterfront, where the riots took place, and the American Interests Section, in the Vedado district.

Groups of pro-Castro workers from the so-called Blas Roca force, mostly armed with truncheons, patrolled the site of Friday's violence as well as other parts of the capital including the area around Havana University.

Malecon Boulevard, traditionally packed with people throughout the hot summer nights, was deserted.

In his televised address, Mr. Castro said one policeman was killed in Thursday's latest ferry hijacking in Havana Bay, while a second one was missing and presumed dead.

He added that the ferry was 12 miles off Havana and the hijackers were threatening to blow it up or kill children among the passengers taken hostage. No confirmation was immediately



Cuban citizens gather around a young man who was wounded in the clashes with police along the waterfront in Havana (AFP photo)

available.

The Cuban Coast Guard was apparently ordered not to intercept it or another ferry seized by would-be emigrants Wednesday following the July 13 sinking near here of a tugboat carrying more than 60 would-be U.S. asylum seekers.

The vessel sank after crew members of three other tugboats sent in pursuit tried to force their way aboard, causing panic during which about 30 passengers drowned, according to witnesses.

The incident led to a wave of protests around the world.

On Wednesday, another commuter ferry was com-

mandeered by 15 armed individuals but returned to Havana under navy tow.

The U.S. Coast Guard picked up the 15 hijackers and took them to Florida, while all the passengers chose to return to Cuba rather than seek U.S. political asylum, the agency said.

On July 26, another Havana Bay ferry was hijacked by four gunmen, later picked up 36 kilometres (22 miles) north of Cuba by the U.S. Coast Guard, along with 15 passengers who requested political asylum.

Social unrest has mushroomed since the col-

lapse of the Soviet Union, which heavily subsidised the Cuban economy, now staggering and beset by shortages. But in the past only isolated demonstrations broke out and were quickly repressed.

Until now, the most serious demonstrations were in July 1973, in the coastal village of Cojimar, near Havana.

Clashes broke out between local people and police there after the police shot and killed three would-be emigrants as they tried to board a boat that had come to fetch them from Florida.



Cuban President Fidel Castro appears on Cuban television after riots that broke out on the waterfront in Havana (AFP photo)

Hiroshima marks A-bomb anniversary

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, Japan's first Socialist leader in nearly half a century, pledged Saturday to help victims of the U.S. atom bomb attack that flattened Hiroshima exactly 49 years ago.

In a televised speech, Mr. Murayama told an estimated crowd of 50,000 during a memorial service at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park: "I am determined to make efforts to take more sufficient relief steps for them (bomb victims) in all sincerity."

He did not, however, elaborate on how aid would be provided to victims of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

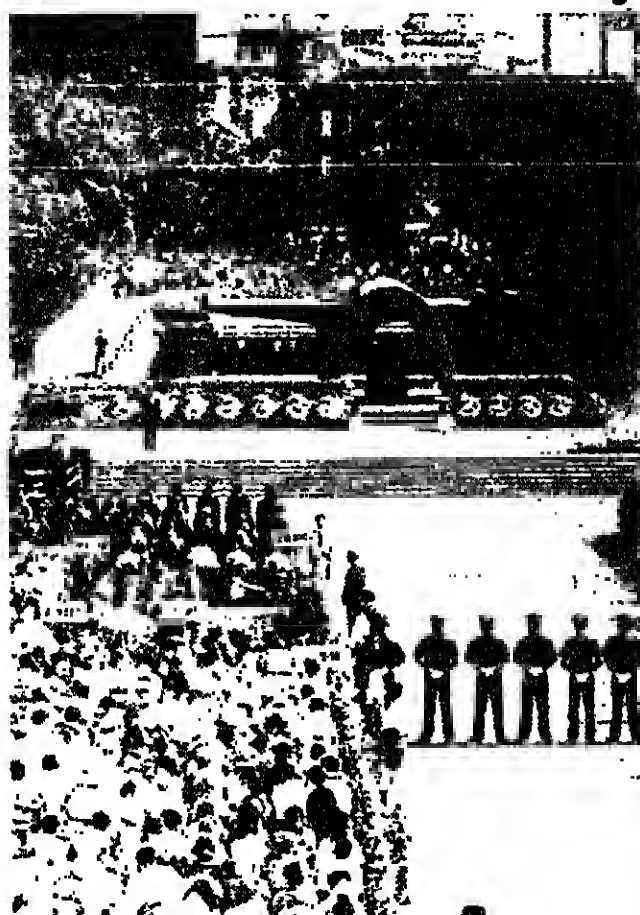
Both cities and anti-nuclear groups, including the Japan Congress Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs backed by the Socialists, want a financial relief law to cover people suffering after-effects of the bombings, as well as families of those killed.

Hiroshima was the target of the world's first atomic bombing near the end of World War II on Aug. 6, 1945. Three days later Nagasaki was hit in the second and last atomic bomb attack.

Earlier this week, Mr. Murayama and fellow Socialist Party members of Japan's coalition cabinet agreed to make efforts for special relief legislation.

But the Socialists' key coalition partners, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), opposes such legislation on the grounds it would discriminate against other war victims and their families, who have not been compensated for their sufferings and material losses.

During the memorial ser-



Police stand guard during the memorial ceremony at 8:15 a.m. for the 49th anniversary of the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima at the Peace Memorial Park with the Atomic Bomb Dome in background. Hiroshima, the world's first city devastated by an atomic bomb, renewed an urgent call on the world to abolish all nuclear weapons (AFP photo)

vice, Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka urged the government to enact a law to provide aid to the A-bomb sufferers.

"Now is the time for Japan to initiate far-reaching relief policies based upon the spirit of national indemnification for all Hibakusha (A-bomb victims) at home and

abroad."

He also made a new plea for the world to abolish nuclear weapons immediately.

"Hiroshima, along with Nagasaki, appeals to the leaders of all nuclear-armed countries to promptly announce the elimination of their nuclear weapons," he said.

Court names new Whitewater prosecutor

WASHINGTON (R) — A federal court Friday replaced Robert Fiske as Whitewater prosecutor, a surprise twist in the investigation dogging the Clinton White House.

Kenneth Starr, a 48-year-old former U.S. solicitor general, was selected by a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington to replace Mr. Fiske, who was named by Attorney General Janet Reno on Jan. 20.

The panel said in its order that it was not questioning Mr. Fiske's integrity. But it said the intent of the independent prosecutor law is that a person unaffiliated with the current administration be appointed to investigate charges against that administration.

Mr. Reno, under pressure from congressional Republicans, had named Mr. Fiske as a special counsel because the Watergate-era law authorising independent counsels had lapsed due to Republican objections. Congress later renewed the law and Mr. Reno asked the court to formally name Mr. Fiske as independent prosecutor.

But the three-judge panel said: "As Fiske was appointed by the incumbent administration, the court therefore deems it in the best interest of the appearance of independence contemplated by the act that a person not affiliated with the incumbent administration be appointed."

The court said Mr. Starr had authority to investigate any possible violations of federal criminal law relating to President Bill Clinton or Hillary Rodham Clinton's relationships with the Whitewater Development Corp or Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan Association, the financial institution owned by James McDougal.

Mr. McDougal was the Clintons' partner in Whitewater, a failed real estate venture in Arkansas. The White House released a statement by counsel Lloyd Cutler that said the Democratic administration would cooperate fully: "The president consistently supported and signed into law the independent counsel statute. The administration will cooperate fully with Mr. Starr."

In a statement, Mr. Fiske promised he would "do everything I can to help him with a speedy and orderly transition."

Republicans hailed the appointment of Mr. Starr, a Republican who was solicitor general in President George Bush's administration, representing the government in arguments before the Supreme Court between 1989 and 1993.

Senate Republican leader Robert Dole said he hoped it would lead to more complete Whitewater hearings by Congress, which is controlled by Democrats.

"His appointment to take

over this investigation will assure that there is no whitewash of Whitewater," said Texas Republican Senator Phil Gramm.

The Senate and the House of Representatives Banking Committees completed their first round of hearings on the investigation Friday. But at Mr. Fiske's request those hearings had been limited in scope to avoid compromising his continuing investigation.

The move took not just Washington, but the legal community by surprise as lawyers attending the annual meeting of the American Bar Association (ABA) in New Orleans reacted to the news of Mr. Starr's appointment.

"I was a little surprised," said Robert Evans, who heads the ABA's Washington office. "I thought they would reappoint Mr. Fiske, but the rationale is legitimate and understandable. The whole idea behind the statute is there ought to be a truly independent person."

Mr. Fiske had completed the first phase of his investigation and was working out of offices in Arkansas and Washington.

He had already investigated contacts between Treasury Department and White House officials on the Whitewater affair and found no illegality, and had also concluded that White House Deputy Counsel Vincent Foster's 1993 death was a suicide unrelated to Whitewater.

Haiti invasion appears increasingly unlikely

WASHINGTON (AFP) — So long as American lives are not threatened, a U.S. invasion of Haiti appears increasingly unlikely because of deep rifts within the U.S. administration over sending in troops.

The Pentagon has shown little stomach for military intervention without a clearly defined mission, terms of engagement and a deadline for leaving for fear of being sucked into a civil war in the strife-torn Caribbean nation.

U.S. military leaders had been looking to a multinational force to launch the invasion, but so far none of the United States' allies have stepped forward to join such a mission.

Despite the Pentagon's reticence and lack of international military support, the White House has kept the military option on the table in hopes that threat of an inva-

sion will persuade Haiti's military junta to step down.

The Washington Post reported that President Bill Clinton's top advisers concluded that, unless U.S. lives are threatened, an invasion should not come before mid-September to allow time to train invasion forces.

The New York Times reported that Defence Secretary William Perry vehemently opposed a suggestion by the number two person at the State Department, Strobe Talbott, to give an ultimatum to Haiti strongman General Raoul Cedras.

"It would be prudent to prepare for the worst and hope for the best, I would never put a time frame on something like that," said Major Robert Jenks, a spokesman for the U.S. Marine Corps.

Others worry about U.S. forces getting bogged down

in Haiti, an impoverished nation of nearly six million people that is beset by intractable political, economic and social problems.

Georges Fauriol, director of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies here, said if American troops storm Haiti they will likely be there for weeks, and more likely months, after the attack.

The Pentagon is unsure how people will react to an invasion and does not discount the possibility of skirmishes with the Haitian military, which could turn U.S. public opinion, he said.

Fauriol noted that U.S. troops could also find themselves embroiled in violent clashes between opponents and supporters of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who was ousted by the military in September 1991.

The Pentagon is also wor-

ried that a lengthy U.S. occupation would in time stir up resentment among Haitians.

"The last time the U.S. intervened in Haiti, it took 19 years (1915-1934) to extricate all American troops," said Neil Livingstone, a national security expert, in the magazine Navy League "Sea Power."

"The only thing we believe that we have to negotiate is the modalities for the military's departure," State Department spokesman David Johnson said.

He indicated that the United States was pleased Latin American countries including Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela had apparently abandoned plans to send a mission to Port-au-Prince to seek negotiations with army chief General Raoul Cedras in a bid to stave off a U.S.-led invasion.

Kashmiris claim victory as Indian forces quit posts

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Indian forces packed up their bunkers around Kashmir's holiest Muslim shrine Saturday, triggering rare celebrations and claims of a major victory by separatist leaders fighting New Delhi's rule.

Indian troops and the paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) had surrounded the lakeside Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar, summer capital of the northern Jammu and Kashmir state, since a month-long standoff last October with Muslim militants inside the shrine.

Kashmiri leaders had demanded the removal of the bunkers, which had been erected last year to enable troops to flush out the militants.

The removal of the posts had also been sought by pro-Pakistan Harakati Ansar militants as a condition for

allowing safe passage to Hindu pilgrims on their annual pilgrimage later this month to the mountain Temple of Amarnath.

"This is a victory for the whole Kashmiri population," Professor Abdul Ghani, a leader of the all-party Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference, said at a formal departure ceremony attended by Indian officials.

"We call upon Kashmiris to celebrate this triumph by lighting lamps for two consecutive nights," he said.

Kashmir's top bureaucrat, Mahmoodur Rahman, and Police Chief Monohar Nath Sabharwal looked on as Hurriyat leaders entered the shrine and brought out a sacred relic, believed to be a hair from Prophet Muhammad's beard, for public display.

A spokesman for the Muslim Awaq trust, managing body of the Hazratbal Shrine, said Friday the government had agreed to dismantle all of the posts.

Kashmiri militant groups had threatened war on worshippers heading for the Hindu religious centre of Amarnath if paramilitary forces were not removed from Hazratbal shrine.

Amarnath is a remote cave near Pahalgam, southeast of Srinagar. It is only open to pilgrims for a brief period each summer when winter snows have retreated and weather conditions permit. It is a 48 kilometres trek from Pahalgam.

The Ansar militant group said last month it would ban the annual Amarnath pilgrimage in protest against the permanent stationing of the BSF posts around the Muslim

shrine.

Mr. Ghani said the Hurriyat would try to persuade the militants to call off their threat.

"We believe in religious tolerance, we are not against any religion," he told the meeting at Hazratbal.

Last year's siege, which ended peacefully with the militants' surrender in return for their eventual release, was an emotional high point in the Kashmiri rebellion against Indian rule that erupted in January 1990.

Police and hospital sources have reported more than 17,000 deaths in the revolt, which is widely supported in largely Hindu India's only Muslim-majority state.

Pakistan and India have fought two of their three wars since independence from Britain in 1947 over Kashmir.

Clinton pollster tells Democrats to run on records

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton's pollster is privately advising Democrats running for Congress to distance themselves from their unpopular leader and campaign on their own records in the November elections.

At stake in November are 35 of the 100 Senate seats, all 435 slots in the House of Representatives and 36 of the 50 state governorships. Democrats now hold majorities in both houses of Congress.

The presidency is not up for renewal until 1996, but the party in White House power traditionally loses ground in these "mid-term" elections and Republicans hope they can exploit Mr. Clinton's unpopularity to make larger than usual gains and perhaps even capture control of the Senate.

House Speaker Thomas Foley, a Washington state Democrat, tried to deflect any political damage that might result from the leaked Greenberg memo, telling reporters: "I think it would be a big mistake for (Democratic) members to distance themselves from Clinton."

Mr. Foley said Mr. Clinton had achieved a great deal since he took office last year

and he expected Democrats to do much better than expected in November by losing fewer than 15 House seats. Most analysts predict Republican gains of 15 to 25 House seats. Democrats now have a 256-178 majority with one independent.

Many Democrats are already trying to distance themselves from Mr. Clinton, whose popularity rating in recent polls has dropped sharply despite that nation's strengthening economy and now hovers in the mid-40 per cent range.

"I'm running on my record and my relationship with voters in my district," said Representative Tom Barlow, a Kentucky Democrat. "People put Clinton apart from their local representative and their senator."

But Mr. Barlow acknowledged that Mr. Clinton was unpopular in his traditionalist, largely rural state because of his attempt to open the U.S. military to homosexuals, his support of tobacco tax hikes and his advocacy of gun control.

Republicans are eager to make the election a referendum on Mr. Clinton. Mr. Barlow's opponent, Ed Whitfield, said: "One of the main

issues in this campaign is the Clinton presidency."

The president is particularly unpopular in the south. A June survey of southern House Democrats found that few wanted the president to visit their districts.

"Congressional races are won and lost on local issues," one Democratic Party official said.

He noted that even former President Ronald Reagan, who campaigned in 1986 mid-terms when his popularity was high, could not keep the Republicans from losing the majority control they then enjoyed in the Senate.

However, acknowledging that Mr. Clinton could be an electoral liability, as Mr. Greenberg's memo appeared to do, is an embarrassing and unusual admission of weakness.

When Democratic National Committee member Don Switzer said in June the party leadership group would understand if candidates ran away from Mr. Clinton, he was rebuked by the White House and by party Chairman David Wilhelm.

Mr. Wilhelm said Democrats needed to campaign proudly on Mr. Clinton's record.

Buckingham Palace to open for 2nd tourist season

LONDON (AFP) — Buckingham Palace, the residence here of Queen Elizabeth II, opens its doors to the public Sunday for a second consecutive tourist season as part of a campaign to raise funds for the restoration of fire-damaged Windsor Castle. Palace officials hope to receive 390,000 people over the next eight weeks, up from 379,000 who came last year to visit the throne room and to wander through galleries featuring masterpieces by Rubens, Rembrandt and Van Dyck. But visitors anxious to get a glimpse of the royal family's living quarters for the price of their ticket — £8 (\$12) — will be disappointed. Only 18 of the 681 rooms at the palace will be open to the public. In the garden gift shop, boxes of crown-shaped chocolates, tea cups, crystal glassware, ties and earrings will also be available. The 1993 season netted the palace some £2.2 million (\$3.3 million), earmarked for repairs at Windsor Castle, heavily damaged by fire in November 1992. The cost of renovation has been estimated at £40 million (\$60 million), 70 per cent of which will be charged to the Queen and the rest provided by the state. The palace is expected to open every summer until 1997 during a period of the year when the queen traditionally resides at her Scottish residence in Balmoral.

Jackson, bride given ecstatic welcome in Budapest

BUDAPEST (AFP) — Michael Jackson and his wife, Lisa-Marie Presley, arrived here late Friday to an ecstatic welcome in sweltering heat from a thousand young fans chanting the name of the U.S. pop star and scrambling for copies of his autographed photo. Jackson, dressed in black and wearing a scarf and sunglasses, appeared briefly from a fifth-floor window at the Kempinski Hotel in Deak Square and waved to a crowd of excited admirers. The singer was starting a three-day visit to the Hungarian capital to film a video for his new album Redemptive Eastern Europe. Fans were clearly disappointed not to have gotten a glimpse of Jackson's new bride, the daughter of the legendary "king" of rock and roll, Elvis Presley. She is making her first public trip with Jackson since the public announcement of their marriage earlier in the week. But spirits soared moments after Jackson's appearance when hundreds of photographs signed by the star, along with Jackson posters, came floating down from the fifth floor of the hotel. Hundreds of fans scrambled to lay their hands on the souvenirs, causing huge traffic jams in Deak Square, one of the busiest in Budapest. "I'm overjoyed to have a piece of paper that Michael Jackson touched with his hand," gushed 14-year-old Livia. "He's incredible, fantastic." She said Lisa-Marie Presley was "surely beautiful and will certainly take good care of their children — but I would like to take care of them myself." Zita Kivacs, 17, was markedly less enchanted with Jackson's wife, describing her as "very unpleasant."

Scotland steps in to save 'Three Graces'

LONDON (AFP) — Antonio Canova's sculpture the "Three Graces" seems likely to be reprieved from being exported by Britain to the United States after a last-minute intervention by the National Gallery of Scotland. The Times newspaper reported Saturday. Timothy Clifford, director of the Edinburgh-based gallery, confirmed the likely reprieve just as the deadline was reached for an export licence for the sculpture to be granted. In a long-running battle to save the Three Graces for Britain, campaigners raised £4.7 million (\$7 million) of the £7.6 million (\$11.4 million) needed to prevent the sculpture by the 19th century Italian artist being exported to the Getty Museum in California. Mr. Clifford was unable to elaborate on the details of the rescue bid or to say how much of the remaining amount would come from his gallery's "reserves." He said discussions were in progress with London's Victoria and Albert Museum which has co-ordinated the campaign to save the statue.

Report: N. Korea opposed to outside reprocessing

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea supports the proposed conversion of its nuclear reactors to safer types, but has refused to ship spent fuel rods out of the country for safe reprocessing, a South Korean news report said Saturday.

North Korean delegates told their U.S. counterparts during talks Friday in Geneva that the spent fuel should be reprocessed at the Yongbyon nuclear complex soon, the Yonhap News Agency quoted diplomatic sources in Seoul as saying.

Vital nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington resumed Friday after a month-long delay caused by the July 8 death of North Korean ruler Kim Il-Sung.

The negotiations are being closely watched to see if North Korea's leadership change will affect its policy.

Before his death, Mr. Kim had promised to freeze this country's nuclear programme in return for diplomatic recognition and other benefits, including economic aid.

In Geneva, chief U.S. negotiator Robert Gallucci said that at Friday's intensive first session the two sides had failed to reach agreement on the fate of some 8,000 spent fuel rods fast corroding in a cooling pond.

But Yonhap said North Korea responded "favourably" to the proposed use of U.S. technology to chemically treat the spent fuel for prolonged storage.

Concern has grown over

the fate of the spent fuel rods since early June, when their removal from the controversial five-megawatt reactor spurred international calls for sanctions against Pyongyang.

U.S. and South Korean officials have been adamant that North Korea be blocked from reprocessing the rods, which could leave North Korea with enough plutonium to produce up to five nuclear bombs.

The Geneva talks had been scheduled to continue Saturday, but the two sides agreed to adjourn until Monday and consult their governments.

Yonhap said North Korean delegates rejected a U.S. proposal that the spent fuel be shipped out to a third country. Pyongyang has insisted reprocessing should begin this month for safety reasons.

Pyongyang also indicated it could introduce Russian technology to replacing its graphite-moderated reactors with safer light-water models, the agency said.

Light-water reactors are considered less dangerous than the old-fashioned graphite models as they produce less plutonium.

Experts here contend that the replacement of North Korean reactors would take up to 10 years and cost nearly \$2 billion.

South Korea and the United States have offered to provide financial assistance to modernise the North's reactors facilities in exchange for the nuclear freeze.

S. Korean police detain more students in crackdown

SEOUL — Police detained a dozen students at Pusan University Saturday in the latest in a series of anti-leftist crackdowns, and seized firebomb-making equipment.

Police in the southern city of Pusan said the students were being held for questioning about whether they were involved in pro-North Korean activities.

One officer said police seized hundreds of pieces of equipment for making firebombs to be used at demonstrations. No violence was reported during the riot police raid.

The Yonhap News Agency said hundreds of Pusan students later staged a rally at the campus to protest against the police action, demanding the students be released and the government stop suppressing student movements.

Police have raided several campuses in Seoul and major provincial cities and arrested

dozens of student activists since the death of North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung on July 8.

Soon after the veteran Stalinist died, police raided Choonnam University in the southwest city of Kwangju to arrest student leaders wanted for leading illegal anti-government protests and to stamp out undercover mourning ceremonies for Mr. Kim.

A spokesman for the prosecutor's office in Kwangju said Saturday a joint investigation team, involving police, prosecutors and national intelligence officials, had confirmed a radical group set up secret altars there to pay tribute to Kim.

He said the team noted in a preliminary report that several students had confessed.

Hanchongryon, the main radical student organisation in South Korea, has denied the charge.

Abiola still held; union leaders seek his views

LAGOS (R) — Nigerian opposition politician Moshood Abiola, whose detention on treason charges has sparked a nationwide strike, remained in custody Saturday despite being granted bail by the High Court.

Leaders of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) were in the inland capital Abuja pressing for a meeting with the multi-millionaire businessman, said by members of his family to oppose bail conditions which prevent him addressing meetings.

The congress, a union confederation, suspended a general strike after just one day Thursday and said that Nigeria's military rulers had agreed in talks to free Mr. Abiola, who is widely believed to have won last year's scrapped army-organised presidential election.

"Until we see him we will not know his own position," Adams Oshiomole, NLC national deputy president, told Reuters from Abuja, where Mr. Abiola was being tried and held.

The court also said that Mr. Abiola, who was arrested in June after proclaiming himself president in defiance of the military authorities, must also keep the peace and remain in the country.

Human rights groups estimate up to 100 people have been killed in riots that have swept Mr. Abiola's southwest Nigeria home region since his arrest.

The oil workers unions NUPENG and PENGAS-NUP, which have been on strike for five weeks to press for Mr. Abiola's release and installation as president, scolded the bail and said their strike, which has paralysed the country, would continue.

"We are not going to call off our strike. In fact we will intensify the action," Bola Omodunni, PENGASSAN's president told Reuters Saturday. "This court thing is a ruse."

Their strike has brought Nigeria to its knees by cutting fuel supplies and disrupting export of crude oil, Nigeria's main source of foreign exchange earnings.

Friday's court session took Mr. Abiola's associates by surprise. His trial had originally been adjourned to Aug. 16 for a ruling on whether the Abuja court had jurisdiction to hear the case.

Reporters present in court said the application for bail was not brought by Mr. Abiola's regular lawyer Godwin Ajayi and was not opposed by the prosecutor.

They said it was clear from the proceedings that the court was hurriedly convened to free Mr. Abiola after the series of meetings between NLC officials and government representatives.

NLC itself called off its short-lived general strike to facilitate negotiations with the government.

Mr. Oshiomole told Reuters the charges against Mr. Abiola would be dropped at the next court sitting scheduled for Aug. 16.

He said NLC had negotiated Mr. Abiola's unconditional release, Pengassan's Omodunni said anything short of an outright return to democracy would not be acceptable to the oil unions.

"We see Abiola as the symbol of democracy and remain solidly behind him. With the bail conditions the government is silencing him and it is a grave mistake for them to think they can solve the current crisis that way," he said.

Bosnian Serbs hand back guns under NATO air strike threat

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. officers said Saturday Bosnian Serbs had bowed to the threat of more NATO air attacks and returned at least four heavy weapons including a tank they had seized from the United Nations in Sarajevo.

NATO aircraft struck the Serbs Friday and the U.N. commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, told them he would order more air strikes if the weapons were not handed over by Saturday.

The Serbs handed back a T-55 tank, two armoured personnel carriers and a Praga anti-aircraft gun snatched from the Ilidza weapons collection point in Sarajevo late Friday night, U.N. military spokesman Major Tom Annink said.

A Bosnian Serb liaison officer had told the U.N. that a fifth weapon grabbed from the compound, an anti-aircraft gun, would be turned over Saturday.

The head of NATO's allied forces in Southern Europe, Admiral Leighton W. Smith, said he believed it had also been given back.

"According to the information I have, the fifth weapon has been returned... but we are in standby mode," he told reporters in the southern Italian city of Naples.

Maj. Annink said the return of the five weapons would remove the immediate threat of more air strikes. But he added: "There is just a pause and we may well continue (with air strikes), but there is no deadline. We are giving the Serbs the opportunity to reorganise and think it over," he said.

The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, John Shalikashvili, said the Bosnian Serb response so far was not enough.

General Shalikashvili said during a visit to the U.S. Army's Rhein-Main Air Base in Germany that the impact of the air attack had been to

force the return of the weapons.

"But that is not nearly enough in my judgement," he told reporters. "There are an awful lot of violations that we quickly need to bring to an end... we need to bring people back to normal life."

Asked whether there would be more air strikes, Gen. Shalikashvili said: "I don't know... I think much of it depends on how the Bosnian Serbs behave."

In nearby Pale, a senior official said the Bosnian Serbs self-declared assembly was expected to meet again and could declare a state of war and a full mobilisation.

Momcilo Krajisnik, the parliament's speaker, told reporters he expected the assembly to convene in the next two days.

Mr. Krajisnik said he expected the parliament to "declare a state of war, general mobilisation and rationing of supplies. The parliament can make such a decision at its

next session to be held in the next two days."

The Bosnian Serb leaders face increasing isolation because of their refusal to accept an international peace plan. Serbian-led Yugoslavia Thursday cut relations with the Bosnian Serbs to try to force them to accept the plan and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic — long-time patron of the rebel Serbs — has launched a fierce media campaign to discredit the Bosnian Serb leadership.

The United States welcomed the NATO air strike as a show of resolve and accused the Bosnian Serbs of provoking the confrontation.

A Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman, quoted by the official ITAR-TASS news agency, said: "It is deplorable that the Serbs themselves gave grounds for this turn of events, acting recently, it would seem, on the principle 'the worse things get, the better for us.'"

Mr. Krajisnik said the Serbs had not definitely rejected the peace plan. However, he said the plan should be adjusted before the Serbs could accept it — something the major powers have repeatedly ruled out.

Friday evening's air strike was the first since NATO aircraft attacked Serb forces besieging the Muslim safe haven of Gorazde in April.

In the latest attack, the United Nations believed a Serb M-16 "tank destroyer" armoured vehicle, mounted with a 76mm gun, had itself been destroyed by cannon fire in the air raid 12 kilometres south of Sarajevo airport.

The M-16 normally carries a crew of five, but a NATO spokesman in Naples said there were no reports of casualties following the attack by a pair of U.S. A-10 "Warthogs."

Two young girls sprint past a team of Ukrainian soldiers as they take aim on a new Serbian sniper position in Sarajevo (AFP photo)

Clinton attacks crime bill foes

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton has accused the National Rifle Association and other interests of endangering American lives by encouraging parliamentary manoeuvres to block a House of Representatives vote on anti-crime legislation.

Mr. Clinton complained that eight days after congressional negotiators agreed on compromise crime legislation, its foes are preventing a final House vote. Supporters have been unable to muster enough votes to approve a rule that must be in place before the legislation itself can come up for a vote.

"The crime bill is stuck in a web spun by powerful special interests," Mr. Clinton said during a White House affair to mark improvement in the U.S. economy. "The National Rifle Association is trying to block the vote on the rule... because they know

that a majority of the House and the Senate will vote for this bill if it gets to a vote."

Mr. Clinton said that while some legislators had honest differences with the bill and were within their rights to oppose it, it was wrong to keep the legislation from coming up for a vote.

"If anybody wants to vote against the crime bill, let them vote against it," he declared. "But do not let us pull another Washington D.C. game and let this crime bill go down on some procedural hide-and-seek. If we're going to have a shoot-out, let's do it in high noon, broad daylight where everybody knows what the deal is."

He told his audience of business people, workers and reporters, "I want to plead with you to ask the Congress over the weekend not to let procedures get in the way of saving the lives and the future

of the United States."

Mr. Clinton called the legislation "the biggest, toughest, smartest crime bill this country has ever passed."

The \$33.2 billion package would authorise 100,000 more police, more state and local prison construction and more crime-prevention efforts. It also would create more than 50 new federal death penalties, send some third-time felons to prison for life and ban assault-style firearms.

The bill's ban on assault weapons was strongly opposed by the NRA.

In addition, some members of the congressional black caucus have threatened to vote against the rule because they are upset by the bill's new death penalty provisions and the removal of a provision allowing use of statistics to help prove racial bias in capital cases.

India 'nearly had' Communist premier

NEW DELHI (R) — Jyoti Basu, Marxist chief minister of India's West Bengal state, says he was offered the post of Indian prime minister by leaders of a national coalition government after it collapsed in 1990.

Mr. Basu's claim is made in an article due to be published in the official Communist Party weekly, People's Democracy. A copy of the article was made available to Reuters Saturday.

Mr. Basu, whose Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM), has been in power in West Bengal for a record 17 years, said he declined the

offer because of ideological differences with his potential supporters.

He said the move was initiated by former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar and Arun Nehru, a relative and an estranged aide of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

"I clearly communicated to Arun Nehru that the notion of a national government was totally impractical and I had also made known to him in no uncertain terms that the question of my getting to become prime minister did not arise at all," Mr. Basu said.

"I made this point during my discussions with both Arun Nehru and Chandra Shekhar that the concept of a national government was not practical in the Indian situation given the diversity of political programmes of the country's political parties with each having its own policy," Mr. Basu said.

Mr. Nehru was quoted in a local magazine interview as confirming the episode.

"Since our party has its distinctive views on the question of forming a government at the centre, I rejected the offer," Mr. Basu said.

NASA robot falls on its side in abrupt end to volcano mission

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — An eight-legged robot exploring inside an active Alaskan volcano fell on its side Friday while climbing out of the rock-strewn crater, bringing a premature end to the ambitious mission, scientists said.

The spider-like Dante II robot was making its slow ascent out of the crater on Mount Spurr, 140 kilometres west of Anchorage, after a week-long exploration mission when the mishap, apparently caused by shifting soil, occurred.

"The soil collapsed and flipped it over," said Butler Hine, a scientist at the National Aeronautics and

Space Administration's (NASA) Ames Research Centre near San Francisco.

The robot, which was controlled from a command centre in Anchorage and monitored via satellite by scientists at Ames, had been scheduled to reach the rim of the crater Saturday.

Mr. Hine said the metal robot, which is 10 feet (three metres) long and eight feet (2.4 metres) wide, had fallen onto one side with all its legs in the air and so was unable to right itself.

Dante is on a slope about 550 feet (170 metres) down, he said.

The accident brings an end to the exploration mission.

Mr. Hine said that scientists would not attempt to recover Dante II for the time being because it was too dangerous.

He said there might be a possibility of salvaging the robot, worth about half a million dollars.

Mr. Hine said engineers would go to the rim of the crater Saturday and recover a generator and other equipment. They would sever the cable carrying communications and electricity to which the robot was tethered, he said.

Scientists at NASA, Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University and the Alaska Volcano Observatory cooperated on the project.

Top-level Taiwan-China contact foiled

TAIPEI (AFP) — A proposed meeting between a senior Chinese official and Taiwan's top mainland policy planner here underwent a twist Saturday as Beijing rejected a Taiwanese suggestion to conduct it as an official occasion.

Tang Shubei, vice chairman of China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) and the most senior Chinese official to visit Taiwan, declined an offer by Taipei to meet with the chairman of the cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), Huang Kuo-Huei.

"I have no plan to visit Taiwanese official organisations," said Mr. Tang at a press conference here. "I only want to visit Taiwanese friends from senior levels when it is in a convenient circumstance."

The remarks shut out the chance of a meeting between Mr. Tang and Mr. Huang, which would have been the first-ever official contact between the Communists and Nationalists since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949.

MAC Vice Chairman Su Chi said Mr. Huang told him that he was "willing to take some time to meet with Mr. Tang at his office either today (Saturday) or tomorrow."

This means Mr. Huang refused to meet with Mr. Tang privately.

Taiwan, which has been planning to loosen its policy of no direct or formal contacts with Chinese officials, has maintained that Mr. Huang could only meet with Mr. Tang during official occasions.

Despite the rejection of the offer, ARATS and SEF negotiators have made progress towards issuing a joint statement expressing agreement on several issues — the most concrete conclusion in five rounds of talks since last April.

Mr. Tang's SEF counterpart, Chiao Jen-Ho, said: "We are working to issue the

joint statement detailing our consensus on the expansion of exchange programmes between young people, scientists, academics and technologies."

The two sides have made major breakthroughs in the areas of cultural, educational and scientific exchanges, as well as fishing issues, including sending official vessels to each other's waters to deal with disputes by fishermen from the two sides.

Mr. Tang did meet with honorary SEF Chairman Sun Yun-Suan, a former vice premier, and invited him to visit China. He said Mr. Sun was an economic expert and the mainland government needs to learn from various experts in developing its economy.

During a press conference, Mr. Tang also lashed out at protesters here, saying their daily demonstrations against his visit would only increase distrust between the two sides and affect relations across the Taiwan Strait.

2 German cities hit by mass rioting

HANNOVER, Germany (AFP) — Two German cities, Bremen in the north and Hannover in central Germany, were hit by mass rioting early Saturday when hundreds of youths rampaged through city streets and clashed with police.

In Hannover, nine policemen were injured when 450 punks assembled for a weekend event dubbed "Chaos Days" rampaged through the town.

189 punks were detained and 35 were still held Saturday.

The trouble started when about 100 youths gathered around a police car sent to investigate complaints from local residents about noise.

According to police, they slashed the car's tyres before running into a nearby street where they joined up with about 150 others from local

bars.

The demonstrators erected barriers and set fire to them before looting the supermarket.

Five police vehicles were damaged and a policeman hurt by a bottle thrown by a rioter during the running battles.

Meanwhile in Gotha, former east Germany, eight youths aged from 16 to 24 were detained late Friday for playing tape recordings of Nazi chants and a Hitler speech in a public place, police said.

Under German law, Nazi propaganda, symbols and songs are banned.

Gotha lies near the World War II Buchenwald death camp, where a demonstration was due to take place later Saturday against a neo-Nazi rampage there last month.

2,500 Albanians are on hunger strike

TIRANA (R) — More than 2,500 former political prisoners in Albania are now on hunger strike to press demands for millions of dollars in compensation for their treatment by the former Stalinist regime, a spokesman for the strikers said.

About 100 ex-political prisoners began fasting in Tirana Thursday to press their demands for compensation in defiance of a court order to end the strike.

On Friday a court ordered the suspension of the fast but this was clearly being ignored.

"We have reports that there are now at least 2,500 hunger strikers throughout Albania... and it appears that police are trying to prevent more from joining in," Kim Basha, a member of the strike committee, said in Tirana Saturday.

"This strike goes on," Kurt Kola, the leader of the

National Association of Former Political Prisoners (SHKIDPP) said in the association's headquarters opposite the parliament building in mid-town Tirana where the original 100 strikers were lying in one hall in the sweltering heat.

Kola said lawyers for the association had appealed to the Constitutional Court to repeal the order by the lower court to end the strike.



A French U.N. soldier gets a helping hand from a resident of Sarajevo as he attempts to climb to a rooftop in order to observe the location of a Serb sniper (AFP photo)

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Naivety or short sight?

THE FLARE-UP in South Lebanon over the weekend as U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher began a fresh shuttle of the Middle East in pursuit of peace should be a reminder of the state of affairs in the region. There cannot be any denial of the reality that it is the very absence of any progress in the Syrian-Israeli track of peace negotiations, and, by extension, the Lebanese-Israeli track of negotiations, that is behind the violence that we witness in South Lebanon. It is inconceivable too that the Israelis, particularly those living near the borders with Lebanon, are happy with the status quo when the threat of violence and Katyusha attacks is ever present.

So what do we have here? Who is to be blamed for the escalation in tension and eruption of violence in South Lebanon that threatens to engulf Mr. Christopher in efforts to defuse the situation rather than dedicating himself to advancing the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations during his latest shuttle?

No doubt, the ball falls back in the Israeli court. Instead of accepting the Lebanese government's offer to undertake immediate security measures to ensure stability along the border with Israel if the Jewish state withdrew from the so-called "security zone," Israeli leaders are engaging Beirut in a media exercise over the presence of Syrian and Iranian forces in Lebanon and the continued resistance put up by Lebanese and Palestinian fighters there.

It is no secret that there cannot be any advance in the Lebanese-Israeli track of talks unless there is similar movement in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations. But, as efforts continue in a bid to break the Syrian-Israeli logjam, little attention appears to be given to any measures to defuse the tension in South Lebanon.

It should be more than clear to Israel by now that unless it shows concrete signs of withdrawing from the "security zone," the resistance attacks would continue regardless of what is happening in the peace negotiations. The Lebanese have seen enough violence to last them a lifetime, and it is naive to think that they would sit back and await a peace settlement to materialise at the convenience of Israel on its own terms as it is seeking today.

It is not enough that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin affirmed in public that his country does not covet "a single inch" of Lebanese territory or a "single cubic metre" of Lebanese water; those claims should be followed up with realistic, visible signs of Israel's intentions to evacuate its neighbour's territory.

The Israelis appear not to have taken seriously a series of recent statements by Lebanese President Elias Hrawi on Lebanon's vision of security arrangements. Unlike as it may be, the Israelis seem not to have understood that what President Hrawi was suggesting was a bilateral arrangement that could be conducive to bringing about a peace settlement between Lebanon and Israel as and when Syria and Israel are ready to enter a similar arrangement. In the meantime, Mr. Hrawi is offering to undertake the responsibility of protecting the border region.

Wasn't the voice loud enough for the Israelis? Or are they still politically short-sighted not to realise that President Hrawi's offer could be a lifesaver that could avert the kind of tension and violence gripping South Lebanon today when the need of the day is a very concerted effort to break the deadlock in the negotiations?

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AN EDITORIAL in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday commended the high level of political and pan-Arab awareness of the Jordanian people. The newspaper said in its editorial that this was clearly manifested in the freedom of expression that prevailed before and after the Washington Declaration at all political, cultural and social levels. This was especially reflected in moves by the legislative authority and its symbols that represent the people, who expressed allegiance to the King, said the statement. In this framework, it added, it is natural that people would differ, including some of the deputies, over some details related to the political settlement between Jordan and Israel. But one thing "for sure, said the newspaper, is that every body agrees on the need to protect the Jordanian society and the state institutions against challenges, including the challenge of peace. And this is natural in our view because a lasting, just and comprehensive peace, which Jordan has been seeking and which was defined by His Majesty King Hussein in the Washington Declaration and in his address before the American Congress, is still part of the declaration of principles and the common agenda, the paper added. Thus it was only natural that three quarters of the Lower House of Parliament members would view the Washington Declaration as a lucky beginning for Jordan on the way to regaining its rights in its land, water and holy places, said the paper. The paper concluded by saying that the full legislative authority is backing the King in his vision of peace, but some forces of opposition to the peace process are emanating from suspicions in the real Israeli intentions towards the peace process.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Saturday criticised Arab governments for not attending the annual meetings of the U.N. Human Rights Committee. Lawyer Hani Al Dahleh, who is also a human rights activist, said most of the Arab countries abstain from the annual conference of the committee and if they were to attend, they delegate a government envoy to deliver an address glorifying his government and commending its keenness to preserve human rights. The envoys go back home after delivering their addresses at the committee's meeting as if nothing had happened, said Mr. Dahleh.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Lloyds Register must go away

THE INSPECTION by the American fleet in the northern part of the Red Sea of all merchandise imported to Jordan via Aqaba will be replaced as of Aug. 25 by an easier sort of inspection, to be conducted by an independent auditor, Lloyds Register, after arrival of vessels to the port and upon discharging the goods.

This is definitely a positive step which will save time, effort and money, and will remove an incentive for major shipping lines to skip Aqaba from their regular schedule to avoid harassment and delay imposed by the American fleet, ostensibly to prevent an alleged violation by Jordan to the trade sanctions against Iraq imposed since August 1990.

This good step is no more good enough, taking into account the improvement in Jordanian-American relations, the acceleration which took place in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiations and the achievements realised so far under the auspices of the United States of America, not only because the inspection of goods in Aqaba by Lloyds Register will cost some \$2 million a month, to be borne by the importers and added to the cost of imported goods, but also because the operation in itself is humiliating to the government and people of Jordan.

The only convincing explanation of the American insistence on the blockade against Aqaba was that the American administration does not trust the Jordanian government.

But, what took place in the White House Rose Garden on July 25, and in the chamber of Congress the following day, should be more than enough to change this attitude, and remove any mistrust that prevailed in the past. It is not reasonable nor acceptable to expect the government of Jordan to carry on with the peace process, while it is still distrusted and singled out from all governments in the region to be subjected to harsh measures.

In addition, we cannot help believing that the blockade imposed on the Jordanian port of Aqaba is not meant against Iraq. It is common knowledge that a substantial part of Jordanian imports come through Lebanese, Syrian and Turkish ports. Those who want to smuggle goods to Iraq—if any—do not have to import those goods through Aqaba. All that they need is to import the goods via Latakia in Syria to avoid American inspection and may save extra cost in the process.

Since the blockade is simply a means of political pressure on Jordan to achieve political ends and to oblige Jordan to behave politically in a certain desired manner, it is high time to put an end to this onerous pressure, and to open a new and clean chapter in the American-Jordanian relations, and to restore mutual confidence. This means that the services of Lloyds Register must be terminated, before they start.

The Americans are definitely aware that the Iraqi borders are wide-open with Syria, Turkey and Iran, without any sort of inspection. The problem of Iraq is that it does not have money any more to pay for its imports, not that it has any difficulty in buying things if it can pay for them.

More important is the fact the Jordanian and Iraqi peoples are part of one Arab nation. It is not conceivable nor morally and nationally acceptable to be asked to normalise our economic relations with Israel before we are able to normalise our economic relations with Iraq. The sanctions are not only hurting the weaker groups of the Iraqi population, they are hurting the Jordanian economy as well. Iraq used to buy 25 per cent of all Jordanian exports. Jordan cannot prosper economically as long as the sanctions are in place. The New York Times has observed in a recent editorial: Sanctions against Iraq should not continue for ever.

Jordan met the American demands, went extra miles in its peace process with Israel, and took huge risks. It is high time to find some understanding and appreciation of its difficulties. The United Nations has nothing to do with the whole episode. It is America that created the problem and is now able to solve it to the satisfaction of the Jordanian people, if the friendship and goodwill of the Jordanians are sought.



Palestinian rule opens insider-outsider rift

By Wafa Amr
Reuters

GAZA—One month after Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's return to Gaza, the Israelis are gone but there's still a rift between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials who arrived with him and local Palestinians they're supposed to lead.

Under a peace deal with the PLO, Israel handed the Gaza Strip and Jericho over to Palestinian police in May. On July 1, Mr. Arafat ended 27 years of exile and entered the self-ruled Gaza Strip to run its daily affairs.

"The geographic distance between insiders and outsiders has been reduced. Instead of Tunis, the PLO leadership is in Gaza. But the political distance remains wide," says political scientist Mahdi Abdul Hadi.

Mr. Arafat has so far managed to maintain law and order.

Many potential troublemakers in his Fatah movement have been put to work in his security forces. His rival, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has cooperated with the Palestinian author-

ity in charge of self-rule. The PLO has also brought changes to Gaza's conservative society. Women have abandoned traditional headscarves and people spend evenings on the beaches, a pleasure denied them under Israeli occupation.

Yet euphoria over Mr. Arafat's homecoming has given way to demands for changes on the ground. For the first time, PLO leaders are in direct daily contact with the Palestinian people they directed from abroad.

After years of painful exile, some PLO officials feel estranged in their own homeland.

Gaza streets still are filled with dirt and garbage. Unemployment remains high. Donor states have yet to make good on pledges and few new buildings have gone up. Mr. Arafat's aides say a lack of cash will hamper development.

"We have seen very little progress or improvement in living conditions since Abu Ammar's arrival," political activist Sami Abu Samhaneh said, referring to Mr. Arafat by his guerrilla nickname. "We have some sort of

social freedoms, but we don't feel democracy in the real sense," he said.

Many who stayed in Gaza under the occupation feel sidelined by the newcomers who run the Palestinian authority. They blame the returned exiles for failing to improve their lives after 27 years of occupation.

Through the many years of the uprising, insiders took the lead in shaping policy. This changed after the Madrid peace conference in 1991. The PLO regained and held control, with Mr. Arafat the main decision-maker.

Some expect the insiders to rebel at some stage if the authority goes on assigning them secondary roles. Others lament the absence of an assertive local leadership.

Activists of Mr. Arafat's Fatah faction living in Gaza and Jericho were largely disappointed to find their leader so domineering when he arrived.

"We are now simply a group of employees working for PLO officials and seeking Arafat's approval," one said. "Many young Gazans think of immigrating."

A Fatah fugitive said deteriorating living conditions had forced him to consider living abroad "to find peace of mind and live like normal human beings."

In some ways tensions were to be expected. Like most Palestinians under occupation, Gazans are accustomed to rejecting authority.

"We never had to stand in line to see officials. We never accepted being pushed around by policemen. We never felt the fear of being arrested or reprimanded for criticising the authority. Now we feel we are like any other Arab regime," one Palestinian said.

There are five security and intelligence departments, some of which face charges of human rights violations of a sort that were levelled against Israel in the past.

Political scientist Ziad Abu Amr said he was not sure the leadership was aware of the dangers and dynamics of the conflicting interests of insiders and outsiders.

"In the absence of integrative factors, the relationship will become antagonistic," he said.

Iranian opponents wait in Iraq to topple mullahs

By Leon Barkho
Reuters

BAGHDAD—Massoud Rajavi wants to topple Iran's mullahs but in the meantime he avoids wearing a necktie so he does not run afoul of their decree that ties are un-Islamic.

Women, who make up 35 per cent of the fighting force of his army, wear headscarves and avoid shaking hands with men as if afraid of "what the mullahs would say."

Mr. Rajavi, 45-year-old leader of the National Liberation Army (NLA) of the Mujahideen Khaliq Iranian opposition movement, is a man whose movements are in many ways constrained.

His army has tanks, guns and other armaments, but he buys them from Iraq, where he has been based since 1986. He admits he would not mount an invasion without consulting his hosts.

He knows, too, his close links with Iraq have done nothing to endear him to the West.

"Nobody would like to have his army outside his country," Mr. Rajavi said, aware that his Iraqi connections are partly to blame for lack of Western support.

"Do you have a better place for us other than Iraq, another place to establish an army?"

In a recent meeting with journalists at his fortress-like compound in Baghdad, Mr. Rajavi refused to spell out terms of his stay in Iraq.

He produced documents in Arabic saying Baghdad would respect the independence of his group and "its freedom of action and complete military and ideological and political independence."

But he added that if he ever asked his army to march on Tehran "a respectful way" would be to "inform the host."

How soon that might be is anybody's guess, but right now it does not look imminent.

He told the journalists that "a minefield of risks" stood between him and his dream of toppling Tehran's clerics.

A rapprochement between Tehran and Baghdad like one in 1975 may prompt Iraq to curb his activities, although he believes differences between the diehard foes are too great to resolve.

Iraq and Iran, which fought a ruinous war between 1980-1988, have not signed a peace treaty and bilateral ties are at their lowest ebb.

Mr. Rajavi's NLA staged large-scale, live-fire military exercises recently on the Iraq-Iran border. Hundreds of tanks, armoured vehicles and heavy artillery as well as helicopter gunships took part, begging the question where they came from.

"Armoured vehicles were bought from Iraq, the same with artillery and tank carriers... helicopter gunships the same," Mr. Rajavi said when pressed to reveal the source of his armament.

He insisted everything was paid for and produced

documents to show amounts of money transferred to the Iraqis. He said more than 90 per cent of purchases were made prior to imposition of U.N. trade sanctions on Iraq shortly after the 1990 Gulf crisis.

It was the first time the Mujahideen were so frank about how they armed themselves. In the past they had insisted most weaponry was part of 1988 booty when their army penetrated up to 200 into the border province of Bakhtara before being repulsed.

Mr. Rajavi put the group's budget in 1993 at \$45 million. He said most of it came from Iranian supporters and from commercial transactions selling carpets and gold.

About \$11 million was spent buying machinery, vehicles and equipment on the Iraqi market, he said.

Mr. Rajavi said his group was suffering financial difficulties but there were distinct touches of luxury during the interview. Bananas, apples and sweets—all virtually non-existent in Iraq due to U.N. sanctions—were served in fine porcelain.

"It was the first time the Mujahideen were so frank about how they armed themselves. In the past they had insisted most weaponry was part of 1988 booty when their army penetrated up to 200 into the border province of Bakhtara."

Born in 1948, Mr. Rajavi spent eight years in the Shah's jails. His group supported the 1979 Islamic revolution of the late Ayatollah Khomeini and he was released only a week before Khomeini arrived in Tehran.

But Mr. Rajavi soon fell out with the clerics. He fled Iran in 1981 and moved base to Iraq in 1986 where he set up his army.

A tortuous road leads to his headquarters, where armed sentries stand guard. Journalists passed through metal detectors to enter a plush hall for the interview. Gunmen, whom Mr. Rajavi described as the "mullahs' diplomatic terrorists," killed two of his combatants in Baghdad and mounted several grenade and rocket attacks on the group's headquarters.

He has a healthy respect for Iran's long arm, much like British author Salman Rushdie.

Mr. Rajavi said he does not support Khomeini's fatwa (religious decree) condemning Mr. Rushdie to death for the alleged blasphemy against Islam in his book, "The Satanic Verses."

Issuing a fatwa to kill Mr. Rushdie was un-Islamic, he said.

Arafat rivals reject appointed council

GAZA CITY (AP) — In a blatant challenge to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, hundreds of opponents to the peace accord held a sit-in Saturday demanding the appointed city council be ousted and municipal elections held.

About 700 supporters of the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement, together with Marxist organisations, descended on the city hall waving banners and blocking roads.

Armed Palestinian police surrounded the crowd, but avoided confrontation.

Hamas is irate that only Arafat loyalists were given seats on the new council and organised the rally to demand open elections and a free press.

"This municipality does not represent the city of Gaza, it does not represent us," said Dr. Ibrahim Yazuri, a Hamas leader.

Dr. Yazuri said the appointment of only Mr. Arafat's men violated an agreement that the council would include representatives of all factions.

Inside, Gaza's mayor, Aoun Shawa, rejected the protest saying all factions were welcomed to join the council, which, he said, was only temporary. Hamas stayed out because they were not given the right to veto council members, he said.

"We are trying to improve the city and those opponents outside know very well that we are here to solve peoples' problems. We are no politicians," Mr. Shawa said.

"This council is only temporary and I can guarantee you that there will be elections," Mr. Shawa said.

The demonstrators were also protesting the crackdown on Palestinian press freedom. This included the arrest of a Muslim fundamentalist reporter for "incitement" after he criticised the peace process. Mr. Arafat also banned the pro-Jordanian Al Nahar daily from the newly autonomous Gaza Strip and Jericho.

"The closure of newspapers and banning of journalists from writing whatever they want is totally rejected. Everyone must be given the freedom to say anything he wants," said Jamal Al Khutari, a Hamas activist.

Mr. Arafat and his aides have insisted repeatedly that the new self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho would guarantee freedoms of speech, press and assembly.

But Palestinians inside the occupied territories fear that Mr. Arafat and his advisors, used to the tightly controlled press in countries where they lived, will try to block press freedom.

The sit-in broke up peacefully after about two hours.



An unidentified Algerian Saturday reads out a communique to journalists at the Folembay barracks, northern France, where he is detained along with 16 other suspected extremists as part of security measures implemented by French authorities after the murders of five Frenchmen in Algeria. At left is Djaffar Al Houari, chairman of the Algerian Fraternity in France (AFP photo)

Algerian group threatens France

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algeria's banned Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) threatened Saturday to exact reprisals inside France if 17 suspected Algerian extremists detained by French authorities were not immediately released.

In a statement received here by AFP, the AIS called for "the immediate liberation" of the 17 Islamic fundamentalists held at a barracks in France, threatening unspecified reprisals inside France if the demand was not met.

The organisation is the military wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the group spearheading an insurrection against Algeria's military-backed secular government.

Sixteen people were rounded up in France Thursday and Friday after suspected fundamentalists shot and killed five French citizens on the outskirts of Algiers Thursday in an attack claimed by another organisation, the Armed Islamic Group.

The 16 were detained at a barracks in Folembay, northern France.

The 17th, Omar Saker, is an imam or religious leader, detained Monday when police discovered him in the boot of his car calling for an armed struggle in France.

French Interior Minister Charles Pasqua said Friday the initial 16 had been served with expulsion orders. It was not known if the same applied to Mr. Saker.

The five Frenchmen — two consular officials and three gendarmes — were among more than 50 foreigners killed in Algeria by Muslim fundamentalists in their two-and-a-half-year low-level war which has left some 2,000 people dead on both sides of the conflict.

In its communique, the AIS accused France of having "declared war on the FIS and the Muslim Algerian people."

It said, "France must renounce its aggressive policy and immediately liberate our brothers, or take responsibility for what the Mujahedeen of the Islamic Salvation Army will make them suffer."

The group accused France, in detaining the 17, of having been "incited by the junta" — an apparent reference to the military-backed leadership in Algiers.

The Paris foreign ministry said France had asked Britain, Germany and the United States through diplomatic channels to silence exiled FIS leaders on their territory.

Bonn and London immediately denied Minister Pasqua's accusation that they were soft on militants and said they had no evidence that crimes had been committed or prepared on their soil.

Among the militants confined in Folembay, surrounded by barbed wire fences and armed gendarmes

S. Africa family shot, victims of crime wave

JOHANNESBURG (R) — A family of five have been shot dead by gunmen in a Johannesburg township, among the latest victims of rampant violence in South Africa where police and Nelson Mandela's government have declared war on crime.

Two gunmen, one armed with an AK-47 assault rifle, the other a handgun, kicked down the door to Floyd Mabaso's Watville home Friday night before spraying it with bullets, killing Mabaso, 26, his wife Agnes, 21, their son Toby, aged one, daughter Ngazile, three, and grandmother Emily Mabaso, 65.

Police lured to years of endemic political violence during the apartheid era, on Saturday reacted with shock and outrage to the "motivated" killings, which took place less than 100 days after South Africa's first all-race elections.

Mr. Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) led government and regional administration have declared war on violent crime and attacks on police which they fear will affect ambitious plans to create jobs and restore essential services and social order in dirt-poor townships, particularly those east of Johannesburg.

"We call upon the community to assist us in apprehending the killers who destroyed a family in cold blood," said a visibly shaken Captain Govindasamy Mariemuthoo.

While police were searching for the Mabaso family's killers east of Johannesburg, about 2,000 officers paraded through sprawling Soweto, to the west of the city, in an attempt to win community support for the anti-crime campaign.

More than 150 police officers have been killed since the year began, all but a handful of the murders unsolved.

Police spokesman Colonel Herman Oosthuizen said in a statement the police parade was aimed at winning the support of Soweto residents and appealed to local people to help track down illegal firearms and criminals.

Two policemen were murdered in the township, South Africa's biggest, last weekend. Their killer, or killers, are still at large.

At the other end of the country, police said an off-duty officer was shot dead in Durban's Lamontville township early on Saturday after being approached by an armed group of men.

"He was then shot in the head, chest and stomach. He died at the scene," Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton Ngidi told Reuters.

Police acknowledge they face an uphill battle in restoring their credibility in black communities which historically regarded them as enforcers of apartheid.

On Thursday, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Oufamadi said the gloves were off in the war against crime. "We will not permit criminal elements to become unseemly dictators," Mr. Oufamadi told Reuters after meeting families of murdered police.

Political analysts and violence monitors said while political violence had declined since Mr. Mandela's national unity government took office in May, crime and the killing of police officers had increased — particularly in the industrial heartland around Johannesburg.

They say robberies, muggings, rapes, car hijackings, child abuse, abduction of babies and the killing of police officers were at record highs.

One senior ANC official has suggested sealing South Africa's borders with Mozambique and Swaziland to try to stem the flood of smuggled firearms, particularly AK-47s.

Libya blames U.S. for sanctions renewal

TRIPOLI (Agencies) — Libya blamed the United States on Saturday for the "unjust decision" by the U.N. Security Council to uphold sanctions on Tripoli, the official news agency JANA said.

The Security Council decided Friday to maintain sanctions because Libya had not met Western demands that it hand over two suspects in the 1988 Pan Am airliner bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland.

JANA said the decision was imposed on the Security Council by the United States, France and Britain, and it condemned "western arrogance, notably from the United States."

It said Libya had been "flexible and cooperative" in the Lockerbie bombing dispute but was being punished for its "nationalist stances and support for just causes."

The sanctions which came into force in April 1992 provide for a flight ban and military embargo on Libya. The Security Council added economic sanctions last December, freezing some of Libya's assets abroad.

Washington is demanding that Libya hand over to the United States or Britain two suspects in the 1988 bombing that killed 270 people.

It is also calling on Tripoli to assist in the investigation led by French officials into a second bomb attack in 1989 on a UTA flight that killed 170 passengers.

In a letter to the United Nations on Monday, Libya requested that the two Lockerbie suspects be tried before Scottish judges at the world court in the Hague.

Russia and the Arab League argued in favour of a U.N. compromise solution on Friday. The sanctions are reviewed by the Security Council every 120 days.

Russia, the council president, suggested that the trial of two Libyan suspects be held in the Hague, a move supported by Libya and the Arab League.

"There was no agreement that the necessary conditions exist for modification of measures of sanctions," Russian Ambassador Yury Vorontsov, the council president, told reporters after closed consultations.

The sanctions cover air traffic, arms sales, diplomatic relations and restrictions on the import of some oil industry equipment. Oil drilling equipment is not prohibited and there is no oil embargo.

Mr. Vorontsov said that Russia proposed the council ask the secretary-general to promote dialogue on the trial and the sanctions, noting that Libya has made some positive statements. But he said the suggestion died for lack of support.

"The general feeling was it is taking too long... action is overdue and effort should be exerted for the peaceful resolution of the problem," Mr. Vorontsov said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinians seek refinery for self-rule

DUBAI (R) — Palestinian investors have approached financial institutions and businessmen in the Gulf to invest in a refinery project for Palestinian self-rule areas, the Qatari News Agency reported on Saturday. It said the Qatari newspaper Al Asharq quoted a Palestinian source as saying a refinery, with a projected capacity of 15,000 barrels per day (bpd), was needed because a Jordanian refinery which would supply the autonomous areas could not meet demand. The refinery would be supplied by crude oil from Arab and Islamic oil-producing countries, the newspaper said. The report gave no indication whether the Palestinian requested had received a response from potential investors, which the newspaper said included Palestinian businessmen in the Gulf.

Zimbabwe denies supplying arms to SPLA

HARARE (R) — Zimbabwe denied on Friday allegations that it was supplying arms to rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) led by John Garang. A defector from the rival SPLA-United faction John, Kulang, was quoted as saying on Thursday that Zimbabwe and Uganda supplied weapons to Col. Garang's mainstream SPLA. "The allegations are not true. It is absolutely not true that we have been sending arms to SPLA. I want to deny the allegations vigorously and emphatically," said Foreign Affairs Minister Nathan Shamuyirira. He told the local state-owned domestic news Agency Ziara that Zimbabwe was engaged only in diplomatic efforts to end Sudan's 27-year civil war.

Observers on way out of Hebron

HEBRON (AFP) — The international observer force in Hebron announced Friday that its mission would end on Monday at the end of its three-month mandate. "On August 8th the mission will end in the city of Hebron. The observers from Norway, Italy and Denmark will leave the area," said spokesman Bjarno Sorensen of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH). "TIPH believes to have nearly fulfilled its mission in Hebron, only a few points are still unresolved," said Mr. Sorensen, pointing to efforts to reopen the Ibrahim Mosque and a full reopening of the town's vegetable market. "TIPH has... been able to lower the level of tension in the city," the spokesman said. "Life in Hebron is on the move back to normal." The 166 observers were deployed in the Israeli-occupied West Bank town after the massacre of more than 30 worshippers in the Ibrahim Mosque by a Jewish settler on Feb. 25.

Mild tremor wakes residents in Lebanon

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — A mild tremor woke thousands of residents in Lebanon's Christian heartland north and east of Beirut at daybreak Saturday. Police said no damage or casualties were reported. The seismological centre in Bhamme in the central mountain ridge northeast of Beirut said the epicentre of the five-second quake was in western Syria, about 200 kilometres east of Beirut. It had a preliminary measured magnitude of 3.5. Such a tremor can cause moderate damage.

PLO staff in Athens strike for pay

ATHENS (R) — About 20 members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) office in Athens are on strike because they have not been paid for months, a spokesman for the group said on Saturday. "We have been on strike since July 27... we have not received our salaries for several months," he said. In a statement, the staff said their survival was at stake. "We assure our people that our action is nothing but a cry of despair," the statement said.

Sudan aid airdrops to begin next week

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Airdrops of food aid for starving civilians in isolated areas of south Sudan are to begin next week, a top government aid official said Saturday. Relief commissioner Ahmad Mohammad Al Aghbash said the aid, consisting of cereals, would be dropped in needy areas where deliveries cannot be made by other means. Some 400 tonnes of aid supplies destined for the region had already been flown from Entebbe in Uganda to south Sudan's main town of Juba, Mr. Aghbash told the Al Engaz Al Watani daily. The operation, sponsored by the World Food Programme, would be carried out at the rate of two flights a day. He added that a relief boat carrying 1,700 tonnes of grain had arrived in the Fungak and Tonga districts of south Sudan's Upper Nile state.

Jordan to insist on detailed talks on water and land

(Continued from page 1)

ing the meeting, Dr. Majali and the participants reviewed the nature of the current phase and the prime minister answered questions raised by the negotiators.

Dr. Anani said this week's talks were a resumption of the discussions Jordan and Israel had already started in Washington and would focus on implementing the provisions of the Washington Declaration, particularly with regards to issues related to regaining Jordanian sovereignty on its occupied land and water rights and the need to speed up negotiations on those two particular issues.

Dr. Anani said Jordan and Israel had covered a long distance on defining the basis for delineating the border.

Dr. Anani said there was an agreement between the two sides on Jordan's fair share of water for the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers, noting that negotiations at the present have become more detailed.

Therefore, he added, the Jordanian delegation should be provided with precise details and information and ready to reply to any Israeli proposals or questions.

In reply to a question on whether there will be a national referendum on the negotiations, Dr. Anani said His Majesty King Hussein was referring to options that "a decision-maker would rely on in issuing a judgement... and if the Lower House of Parliament is the side entrusted with representing the people in this issue and reflects the people's will as it is understood by His Majesty from the expressions of support he received... therefore Parliament complies with the overwhelming popular will which was manifested during His Majesty's visit to Washington and afterwards."

He said it was the King's prerogative to decide whether there is a need for such a referendum.

He said that Israel and Jordan had agreed to refer to the British mandate agreement with regard to the border and water issues and the two sides set up a sub-committee to facilitate the work.

Dr. Anani said there were not any ready arrangements for the King to visit Jerusalem.

"What Jordan wants to say on the issue of Jerusalem is that it is more serious than being left for political rivalries and we are looking for a right that originally belongs to the Islamic and Arab nations, the right to Islamic and Christian sites," Dr. Anani said. "We will not make the issue of Jerusalem an issue under compromise at the current state."

About moving the negotiations from Washington to the region, Dr. Anani said this was not meant to end the negotiations process but was done because the nature of negotiations had required so and because Jordan was about to take practical steps that would regain its basic rights.

He said that there were some benefits already emerging as a result of the progress in the process, including general budget issues, noting that Jordan was setting American and British debt relief.

Dr. Anani said His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan will represent His Majesty at a celebration to inaugurate a border crossing point between Jordan and Israel Monday in the south. He said Prince Hassan will be accompanied on the ceremony by several ministers and senior officials.

He said on the Israeli side the ceremony will be attended by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and a delegation accompanying him will also attend.

The ceremony will include short addresses by Prince Hassan, Mr. Rabin and Mr. Christopher.

Dr. Anani said the ceremony would be followed by a round of talks attended by King Hussein, Prince Hassan, Dr. Majali and other senior officials, and on the Israeli side by Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres.

On the American side the talks will be attended by Mr. Christopher and the accompanying delegation.

After the meeting, he said, the King will meet with journalists at a press conference.

Two Israeli soldiers killed

(Continued from page 1)

claim that the Movement of the Oppressed had carried out the bombings of Israeli and Jewish targets in London on July 26 and 27.

"We warn the Jewish people that if they bomb our people again, whether in the south, in Beirut or in the Bekaa, we will hit Jewish interests across the world and cause rivers of blood to flow like we did in Argentina and London," he said.

The anonymous caller did not claim direct responsibility for the Buenos Aires bombing but mentioned it as part of the fight by fundamentalists against Israel.

On July 29, a caller from the same group had already claimed responsibility for the London car bombings.

In a separate claim, a statement was sent to the London-based Arabic newspaper Al Hayat saying the bombings in the British capital were the work of the Palestinian Resistance-Palestine Jaffa team.

'Iraq could be part of peace process'

(Continued from page 1)

However, the Iraqi government has consistently denied such reports. In one instance after carrying an official denial, an Iraqi state-controlled paper said last year the Baghdad government might demand billions of dollars in reparations from Israel for the destruction of its Osirak nuclear reactor. The reactor was demolished in an Israeli air raid in 1981.

Observers here did not rule out the possibility that Iraqi-Israeli contacts could in fact have taken place, but they also suggested that the Israeli reports could be a ruse to arouse Iraqi interest in contacting the Jewish state.

"After all, Israel is the closest ally of the United States, and it is presumable that Israel could be suggesting itself as a go-between for Baghdad and Washington," said a seasoned observer.

"For all practical purposes, Israel cannot say that peace has been established in the Middle East until Iraq joins the process," added the observer. "What better way

Arafat secures U.S. backing

(Continued from page 1)

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said: "It is not possible just to keep complaining, something must be done. And if there is one complaint from this side and one complaint from the other, they should discuss it."

The minister told reporters before the talks Mr. Arafat and Mr. Christopher would also discuss how to keep the Israeli-Palestinian process moving, beyond the first stage of self-rule for Gaza and Jericho only.

"It's not possible to stop at this stage only. We have to move quickly from one stage to another in order to implement the timetables," he said.

Arab Gulf states edge closer to customs union

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Six wealthy Arab Gulf states have made headway in a long-standing bid to set up a customs union which will give birth to a common regional market and pave the way for a free trade pact with European economic partners. Gulf officials have said.

Customs chiefs from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have finished drawing up most of a list of imported products to be exempted or covered by a proposed five to 10 per cent customs tariff, they said.

The customs officials, who reviewed the list at talks in Riyadh in July, will meet again in the Gulf capital in October to put the finishing touches and discuss the unified tax proposed by the GCC secretariat.

"The date of the October meeting has not been fixed yet but it could take place in the second half of the year," an official from the Riyadh-based secretariat told AFP by telephone.

The meeting will cover the secretariat's proposal for a standard customs tariff and the list of products to be covered. The list has almost been completed and this constitutes a big step towards a customs union, he said.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — have been considering unifying their tariffs for more than seven years in line with their 1983 accord to establish a common market.

Until recently, the talks made little progress as some members had refused to lower their tariffs on the grounds this will hit their income. Bahrain was the strongest opponent of reducing duties as import taxes provide a large part of its revenues, in contrast with other GCC members, which depend heavily on oil and gas exports.

Saudi Arabia, which also imposes high tariffs, had demanded selective cuts to protect its burgeoning industries. Another obstacle was the low tariff in the UAE, which had argued hiking taxes was against its free trade policy. But the problem has been tackled this week, when it raised duties to four per cent from one per cent.

Gulf officials said the compromise of five to 10 per cent was an initial proposal and could be modified to accommodate more demands by members.

But they noted it could be endorsed if member states agreed on exempting certain products and maintaining protection on some others.

"The problem of revenues could be resolved through a mechanism that will be discussed at a later stage," the GCC official said. "It provides for collecting tax revenues from all members and distributing them proportionately. We have found such a suggestion feasible but it needs more studies."

UAE customs chief Obaid Bussit said this week the five per cent tariff would cover food and other essential products while 10 per cent would be levied on luxury items and other non-essential goods.

"I am optimistic about a unified GCC customs tariff," the official Gulf News Agency quoted Bahraini acting customs director, Ali Muhamid, as saying. "GCC states have made large progress in bridging the gap in their views about the tariff and this will accelerate plans for a joint tariff."

In recent Gulf press comments, GCC assistant secretary general Abdullah Al Qirwaiz said a customs union was essential for the creation of a common market, which also envisages alignment of currencies and linking of bourses.

A common GCC market will give birth to the biggest oil bloc in the world and one of the main consumer markets, with imports of more than \$80 billion a year. Its gross domestic product (GDP) stood at around \$204 billion in 1992, nearly 42 per cent of the total Arab GDP of \$480 billion.

Gulf officials have said a single customs tariff would facilitate their negotiations with the European Union for a free trade pact, that will open European market for the growing GCC petrochemical exports.

GCC states produce most of the Arab petrochemical exports of around eight million tonnes per year and their investment in the sector is estimated at \$18 billion. An official study has estimated they need to invest \$20.8 billion to boost petrochemical output to face growing demand.

Russian premier promises lower taxes to boost output

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has promised lower taxes to stimulate output which fell by almost a fifth in the first half of the year.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said during a visit to the northern autonomous republic of Karelia that a new tax regime, to be introduced from the beginning of 1995, would lighten the burden on companies.

"We will lower taxes. The tax system must not impede production," Interfax News Agency quoted him as saying.

Mr. Chernomyrdin spoke as new data from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) statistics committee, quoted by Interfax, showed Russia's gross domestic product (GDP) fell 17 per cent in the first half of 1994 over a year ago.

All members of the CIS, which groups 12 former Soviet republics, have struggled to readjust their economies to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the loss of old trading ties.

Mr. Chernomyrdin was quoted by RIA news agency as saying it was not normal that more than 60 per cent of a company's profits should go on tax.

He was quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency as saying the government intended to support domestic producers by not lowering import duties in the near future.

However, he said he was tired of hearing complaints from enterprise directors and pleas for cash to support production.

"Get out on to the internal market and don't wait for someone else to solve your problems," he told directors of a paper machine factory.

Western economists said any moves to improve tax system, which was not conducive to growth, would be welcome.

"It will definitely shift firms from looking at how to avoid paying taxes to focusing on the production side," said one Western banker.

However, another cautioned that lower taxes could lead to wider budget deficit, requiring a growth in money supply.

The 1994 budget envisages a deficit of 70 trillion roubles, or 10 per cent of GDP.

Finance Minister Sergei Dubinita has said the first half deficit was just above 10 per cent of GDP and that the deficit was "at the level we have planned."

The government has also been aggressively selling treasury bills to narrow its budget deficit.

Recently, an auction of 595.6 billion roubles (nearly \$300 million) of three-month T-bills was oversubscribed by banks with demand totalling 707.5 billion (nearly \$350 million).

But finance ministry officials say tax and other budget revenues will be way below the target this year.

Many economists say revenue forecasts are over-optimistic and spending plans do not take account of tough demands from the military and agriculture. State spending is expected to rise in the coming months to finance the harvest campaign.

In another step designed to stimulate output, Russia's central bank has cut its three-month refinancing rate to 150 per cent annual from 155 per cent, the sixth cut since April.

The central bank has lowered its refinancing rate in stages from 210 per cent following a steady fall in monthly inflation to 4.8 per cent in June from a 1994 peak of 22 per cent in January.

"The rate cut of five per cent has really not had a big effect on the market. The central bank has been playing catch-up with the interbank rate," said Viktor Huaco, president of the ITS Finance Corporation.

Mr. Huaco said it was unlikely the rate would fall much further soon because of signs of rising inflation.

Consumer prices rose 5.1 per cent in July, government figures have showed. Officials say inflation will rise to 10 or 12 per cent in August and September because of the growth in money supply and new import taxes on a wide range of goods.

pressure from pro-democracy groups and unions to quit, Nigeria's rulers have given little attention to the economy, leaving it to drift, financial analysts say.

Shrinking revenue denies manufacturers the hard currency they need to import raw materials and leaves the state hard pressed to service its \$30 billion foreign debt.

Debt servicing arrears at the end of this year may exceed the \$7 billion anticipated in the 1994 budget.

Western creditors and trade partners, unhappy about the slow pace of democratisation and the government's abandonment of IMF economic reforms, are unlikely to be sympathetic to requests for debt relief or new funds.

Cuban lawmakers approve new tax system, restore income tax

HAVANA (AFP) — The Cuban National Assembly approved a new tax system, bringing income taxes back for the first time in 30 years, and sharply increasing existing state levies.

In a unanimous vote, legislators passed a bill introduced by President Fidel Castro, who attended a two-day session of the National Assembly of People's Power.

The bill states that "as an inalienable, general principle, all income, including salaries, will be subject to taxes proportions to their amount."

An initial provision in the bill that called for income tax collection "when the country's economic and social conditions permit it," was struck from the final version at President Castro's insistence.

President Castro said income tax "must not be an untouchable dogma," and restricted debate on the controversial provision.

He also urged legislators to "save the social security" system from its current deficit of more than \$500 million through workers' contributions.

Cuba's economy and government spending has been decimated by the break-up of the Soviet Union, which cost the Caribbean nation its East Bloc trade subsidies, and the three-decade-old U.S. trade embargo.

Stressing the need to "gradually create fiscal awareness among our people," the bill calls for rescaling the current, low-keyed fiscal system and imposing new taxes, mainly on national and foreign business profits and personal income.

The bill also calls for taxes on real estate, the use of natural resources and advertising, and imposes highway tolls.

Joint ventures with foreign companies will not be affected by the new plan, and will continue to be subject to a 1982 decree outlining a special status with certain tax breaks.

Farming, which has been hard hit by the economic crisis in Cuba, would also be exempt from any new taxes.

In view of our lack of experience on fiscal matters... the system will be introduced gradually beginning next year," Finance and Price Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez said.

He acknowledged the complexity of the task, adding that the measures "will be unpleasant, requiring an advanced level of understanding."

However, Mr. Rodriguez said the measures are "urgently needed" to heal the ailing economy suffering from an oversupply of currency of close to \$12 billion, with a budget deficit in excess of \$3 billion.

Officials said the measure would enable the government to double its current revenues of 500 million to 550 million pesos annually.

The \$1.28 billion financial scandal, in which bankers and brokers colluded to illegally divert funds from the inter-bank securities market to the then-booming stock markets, briefly disrupted an economic liberalisation programme and is still embarrassing the government.

Mr. Rangarajan said the Institute of Chartered Accountants had issued guidelines defining the scope of external audit. It lets auditors report directly to the RBI any serious irregularity.

He admitted that there were serious shortcomings in RBI's supervision in the past. Until recently, the state-run banks were inspected once in four years. They will now be inspected once a year.

The RBI last week served notice on 20 banks, including nine foreign ones, saying they must pay 1.47 billion rupees for accepting funds irregularly in India's worst financial scandal.

India tightens banking regulations

BOMBAY (R) — India's central bank has tightened its regulatory control over the banking sector to prevent a repeat of the scandal that rocked the country two years ago.

Chakravarty Rangarajan, governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), said Saturday banks have been asked to introduce a system of concurrent auditing covering 50 per cent of their business operations and 100 per cent of treasury operations.

"This should facilitate early detection of errors and failures," Mr. Rangarajan told the Indian Banks' Association.

Nigeria's oil strike compounds economic woes

LAGOS (R) — A month-old strike by oil workers demanding the restoration of democracy is compounding Nigeria's economic problems by cutting vital crude oil exports.

"There is no way the strike is not going to hit vital areas of the economy, such as revenue and our ability to fund imports and repay foreign debts," says a senior central bank official.

The strike by the oil unions Nupeng and Pengassan has for at least a week bit deep into oil production and exports, which provide more than 90 per cent of hard currency earnings.

Industry sources said Nigeria's oil production was probably cut by about a third of its normal 2.0 million barrels per day.

They said the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, which pumps about half the country's crude, was producing at about 50 per cent its normal level.

Other multinationals have also suffered, though not as much as Shell.

An official of AGIP, a production at its Brass River system had been cut, but denied reports that the terminal had been evacuated.

The head of Chevron Nigeria Ltd. was quoted by the Guardian newspaper as saying the strike was hitting his firm's output.

"I cannot say immediately how much we are losing but we have suffered substantially in terms of production delay and losses," said Bill Edman, Chevron Nigeria's managing director.

The strike by the oil unions demanding the release of detained politicians Moshood Abiola and his installation as president, has also disrupted domestic fuel supplies, public transport and other services.

Mr. Abiola, the apparent winner of last year's annulled

presidential vote, is on trial for treason after proclaiming himself president in defiance of military ruler, General Sani Abacha.

Banks in Lagos, Nigeria's financial centre, have been closed for more than three weeks due to a strike by bank employees and management fears that the crisis will set off a run on deposits.

The virtual paralysis of Lagos, Nigeria's commercial centre, has affected the whole economy.

"Everything is at a standstill. The central bank is concerned but there is nothing we can do since it is not an economic problem we are facing," the central bank official said.

Faced with mounting

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY AUGUST 7, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The New Moon in Leo today isn't well aspected so it would be better if you spend so time relaxing and getting away from it all, even if you have to go by yourself. Take it easy.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Try to understand the needs of your mate and be more helpful than you have been in the past. Take time for meditation early to the day.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Do whatever will make your position with friends more ideal. The evening can be happy from a social standpoint if you are pleasant to others.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Plan how to get the most out of the coming week's activities and schedule them well. Take no risks with your reputation.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get to touch with good friends and plan recreations far into the future. Express happiness with your loved one.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Make your home more harmonious by doing those things which will please your family members. Make plans for the future on family excursions.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Try to help a good friend and improve your relationship with this individual. The evening is fine for pleasure, whether at home or elsewhere.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day to make your surroundings more attractive and comfortable. Plan how to have greater income in the near future.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Study ways to gain personal aims and make plans to go after them in a positive manner. Don't retire too late tonight so you will be fresh for tomorrow.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Contact a business expert and gain the advice you need this time. Spend more time with the one you love and show much appreciation.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Contact good friends who can give you fine ideas on how to advance in the days ahead. Strive for happiness in your personal and business life.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Engage in those outside activities which could give you added prestige in your community. Do something kind for a close tie who will appreciate it.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Conditions are not favourable in the morning, but happiness is in store for you later in the day. Study career matters and be successful.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

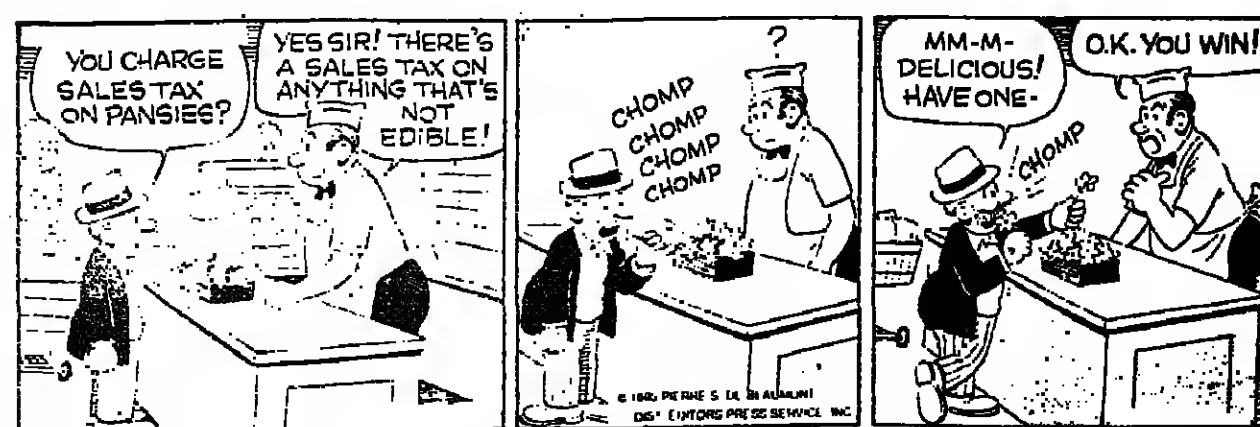
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Hazel Arnold and Mike Anglin

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ETHUC

FLECT

SESAUR

DOYLEM

Can't squeeze another customer in here

FOR THE POKER PARLOR ALMOST NOTHING BEATS THIS

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: AGILE RUSTY BEYOND MALLET

Answer: Athletes who learn humility often and up with these — ALTERED EGOS

THE Daily Crossword by Avery P. Bromfield

ACROSS

1 Film unit

5 Impaled

10 River to the North Sea

14 A Fitzgerald

15 "A Bell For..."

16 Beethoven

17 Musical instruments

20 "What's in..."

21 Actor Brian

22 Color

23 Literary collection

25 Harvest

27 Picturesque

34 Everything

35 Penn city

36 A Delia

38 Trails

40 — Island, NY

43 ERA, a g

44 Specific talent

46 Notion

48 Give — try

49 Crowd pleaser

53 Consider

54 Money unit

55 But wood

58 "Be thou as chaste..."

61 Count of jazz

62 Land measure

63 Dowels

65 27 Polio vaccine

66 Lab burner

68 TV movie, often

70 Actress

71 Sommer

72 A Murphy

73 Natterjack

DOWN

1 A McIntire

2 Dash

3 Exile site

4 Nonfiction one

5 Paving material

6 Australian site

7 Malacca

8 A Gandhi

9 Favorites of a kind

10 Clean air gp

11 August

12 Navigation aid

13 Otherwise

18 Lamp spirit

19 "W — Hammer"

24 Land measure

25 Dowels

26 Polio vaccine

28 Metallic sound

29 English composer

30 Hoedown of

31 Kindled anow

32 Up to

33 Lariat

37 Roman

38 Marine fish

41 Actress

42 Supno

43 Transmut

45 Work on

46 Dough

47 Salt-strewn

48 brick

50 — Under the

51 Expressed amusement

52 Mars or Venus

53 Cheese

54 Locked

56 Renss

57 A Snow

58 Wood measure

59 Same: prof.

60 French town

61 Ms Cheese

62 Locked

66 No, in

67 One, in Paris

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rijkaard ends international career

AMSTERDAM (R) — Frank Rijkaard is quitting the Dutch national team and plans to retire from football at the end of this season, the Dutch news agency ANP reported on Friday. The 31-year-old midfielder said there was no point remaining in the national side because he would not be available for the whole of the Netherlands' qualification campaign for the 1996 European championship. The last of Rijkaard's 74 international appearances was the 3-2 World Cup quarter-final defeat to Brazil in Dallas. Rijkaard returned to play for his club Ajax Amsterdam last season after six successful years at AC Milan and is hoping to help lead them to a successful defence of their Dutch title in his final season.

Maradona bought over-the-counter medication

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Diego Maradona bought "over-the-counter" medication in the United States during the World Cup, containing ephedrine derivative, a senior sports doctor said here Friday. Argentina's World Cup captain was sent home early from the World Cup by FIFA, football's governing body, for taking ephedrine, a banned drug. Nestor Lentini, head of Argentina's leading control body on sports medicine, the CENARD, said the institute had carried out an investigation into where the ephedrine came from. Lentini told journalists Maradona was taking medication permitted by FIFA, world football's governing body, at the start of the World Cup. He ran out of the medication after Argentina's first match against Greece on June 21. He bought a substitute from a Boston pharmacy. The new medication, unknown to the player, contained the banned drug. Argentina Football Association President Julio Grondona will travel to Zurich on Sunday to defend the player at a FIFA hearing into the drug case. Maradona is also expected to attend. FIFA will announce its findings on Aug. 26.

Wednesday close Petrescu deal

SHEFFIELD, England (AFP) — Sheffield Wednesday completed the 1.3 million-pound signing of Romanian World Cup defender Dan Petrescu here on Saturday. The 26-year-old from Italian club Genoa signed a four-year contract at Hillsborough then flew to Bucharest to train with his former club, Steaua, while waiting for a work permit. Wednesday manager Trevor Francis was delighted to have captured the defender. "I'm very pleased that we have taken a player from the Italian League, which is difficult to do," he said. Petrescu said: "This is a test for me. I have seen English football on television and I like it. In Romania people say it is difficult to play in England but I am looking forward to it."

Eldredge back on medal stand

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP) — Charlie Chaplin on skates.

Todd Eldredge paralysed the mannerisms of the comic genius including an unintentional pratfall — to win the silver medal in men's figure skating Friday night at the Goodwill Games.

The former two time U.S. champion finished behind 1994 Olympic champion Alexei Urmanov of Russia, breaking a three-year medal drought in major international championships.

Eldredge was the surprise of the skating competition, knocking 1994 Olympic bronze medalist Philippe Candeloro of France into third place.

The 23-year-old Eldredge had failed to produce in big events since winning the bronze medal at the 1991 World Championships. He was 10th at the 1992 Olympics, seventh at the 1992 Worlds, and failed to qualify for the last two worlds and the 1994 Olympics.

"I'd been training really well for the last three weeks and my confidence was pretty high," Eldredge said. "Not being at the worlds this year, it's good to go out and compete against the guys who were there and to place ahead of some of them. For me, it was my 1994 Worlds."

It was a banner night for the hometown skaters at the 7,500-seat Yubileiny Palace of Sports, which was at near

capacity. Urmanov lives and trains in St. Petersburg, as do Artur Dmitriev and Natalia Mishkutienok, who put on a near flawless programme to win the pairs competition.

"The native walls helped us so much here," Dmitriev said.

"I've never seen such reaction in St. Petersburg," Urmanov said. "Maybe this will cause a new revival of interest in figure skating."

Russians also dominated in other events Friday, beating the United States for the gold medal in women's volleyball, winning the men's 3-metre springboard diving event, and capturing two of the three men's gymnastics finals.

Eldredge has been working on bringing more life into his routines. It showed Thursday night in the technical programme when he placed second, and especially Friday with the Chaplin routine.

He struck Chaplinesque poses — taking stutter steps, miming the twirling of the cane, hunching his shoulders, pretending to take a flower out of his pocket, adopting a shy innocent look.

But about halfway through the programme, as he was skating backwards, Eldredge tripped up in best Chaplin fashion.

"As I was doing my back crossovers, my foot just slipped right out from under me and I ended up on my rear end," he said.

Despite the fall, Eldredge scored 5.75 and 5.75 and 5.85.

Urmanov, using a more classical routine, nailed six triple jumps and faltered only a triple flip to score technical marks of 5.85 and 5.95 and a clean sweep of 5.95 for artistic impression.

Candeloro, the portailed French heart-throb, had his young female fans shrieking like rock groupies before, during and after his "godfather" routine. But rough landings on more than half of his attempted triple jumps kept him in third.

Mishkutienok and Dmitriev, the 1992 Olympic champions, led a Russian — and St. Petersburg sweep — in the pairs. Marina Eltsova and Andrei Bushkov took the Silver and Egoenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov the bronze.

American pairs fared better than they did in Thursday's technical programme.

Stefanie Stiegler, 14, and Lance Travis, 23, held onto fifth with a smooth routine. Calla Urhanski, 34, and Rocky Marval, 28, the former two time U.S. champions reunited this year, finished sixth.

Earlier Friday, Gorya Bonaly took the lead after the women's technical programme.

The session was held in the afternoon to make up for delays caused by ice-freezing problems at the rink.

In other events Friday: Russia swept the United States 3-0 (15-6, 15-10, 15-8) to win the gold medal. Japan beat China 3-1 for the bronze.

In diving, Dmitri Sautin of Russia won the men's 3-metre springboard. China's Chen Shen took the silver and Germany's Jan Hempel the bronze. Scott Donie was the top U.S. finisher in fifth.

In men's gymnastics, Yevgeni Shabayev of Russia and China's Chien Dun shared cold in the parallel bars. Grigori Misutin of Ukraine won the vault and Russia's Aleksei Voropayev the horizontal bar. The best U.S. finishers were Scott Keswich, fourth in the vault, and Drew Durbin, fourth in the horizontal bar.

The yachting competition, which had been postponed for two days because of lack of wind on the Gulf of Finland, was finally completed. Craig Monk of New Zealand won gold in the Finn class, with Eric Oerger of the United States getting the silver; and Murray McCaig of Canada won gold in the Mistral.

Graf reaches Toshiba Classic semifinals

CARLSBAD, California (R) — Steffi Graf overcame inconsistent play and a strong challenge from France's Julie Halard on Friday to advance to the semifinals of the Toshiba tennis Classic.

The top-seeded world number one raced through the third set to complete a 6-4 6-7 6-0 victory over the sixth-seeded Halard. But the German star is not at all happy with her game.

"I can't say I'm very pleased with the way I'm playing," said the three-time champion. "Obviously in the third set things went better but that's because she got tired."

While Graf struggled with her strokes, second seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario crushed Germany's Christine Singer 6-0 6-1 in 51 minutes to take her place in the final four.

Sanchez, who escaped a tough three-set match on Thursday to reach the quarter-finals, never left any doubt about the outcome of Friday's contest.

"Today was much different," said the French Open champion, who committed just four unforced errors. "Yesterday was kind of a warning and I didn't want the same thing to happen as it did

yesterday. I came out very hungry and was ready to play today," added Sanchez, who will play either Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez or Juna Novotna in Saturday's semifinal.

Graf will meet unseeded American Tami Whitlinger-Jones, who moved into the semis when fourth seed Lindsay Davenport defaulted due to a strained left calf muscle.

The top seed held a 5-2 second set lead when her game unravelled and the 18th-ranked Halard mounted a rally to force a tie-break.

"At 5-2 everything was fine, but then I just kept falling apart," said Graf, who committed a whopping 41 unforced errors in the two hour and 10-minute match. "I don't think I'm really closing out the games very well right now."

Halard won the tiebreaker 8-6 on a questionable service call which upset the German star. Graf then settled down in the final set and cut way down on her errors to improve to 7-0 against Halard.

But blowing a big lead has Graf concerned. "I just feel I'm not 100 per cent on the court," she said. "My concentration is not where I want to be all the time."

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♦ 8 6 3
♣ K 10 9

SOUTH
♠ A 4 3 2
♥ Q 8 2
♦ Q 9 2
♣ A 8 7 2

The bidding:
North: 1♣, 2♦, 3♥, 4♠, 5♣, 6♦, 7♥, 8♠, 9♣, 10♦, 11♥, 12♠, 13♣, 14♦, 15♥, 16♠, 17♣, 18♦, 19♥, 20♠, 21♣, 22♦, 23♥, 24♠, 25♣, 26♦, 27♥, 28♠, 29♣, 30♦, 31♥, 32♠, 33♣, 34♦, 35♥, 36♠, 37♣, 38♦, 39♥, 40♠, 41♣, 42♦, 43♥, 44♠, 45♣, 46♦, 47♥, 48♠, 49♣, 50♦, 51♥, 52♠, 53♣, 54♦, 55♥, 56♠, 57♣, 58♦, 59♥, 60♠, 61♣, 62♦, 63♥, 64♠, 65♣, 66♦, 67♥, 68♠, 69♣, 70♦, 71♥, 72♠, 73♣, 74♦, 75♥, 76♠, 77♣, 78♦, 79♥, 80♠, 81♣, 82♦, 83♥, 84♠, 85♣, 86♦, 87♥, 88♠, 89♣, 90♦, 91♥, 92♠, 93♣, 94♦, 95♥, 96♠, 97♣, 98♦, 99♥, 100♠.

Opening lead: Five of ♣.

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spot, but the alternative contract of five diamonds makes sense. Note that North had no qualms about raising spades with good three-card support.

East won the first two tricks with the queen and ace hearts, then continued with the king. Declarer ruffed and drew three rounds of trumps and all would have been well had the suit split evenly. As it was, West remained with a long trump and put it to good use by ruffing the third diamond. On the club return the last chance for the contract vanished when East topped dummy's queen with the king and declarer could scrounge only seven tricks.

The 4-3 fit was not the reason for the disaster. Declarer's technique was at fault. Suppose that, instead of ruffing the third heart, declarer were to discard a minor-suit card.

The defenders' book would be complete, but South would be in charge. A heart continuation would be ruffed in dummy and, after drawing trumps, declarer would score 10 tricks in all—four trumps, five diamonds and the ace of clubs. The play is essentially the same after any other return; declarer needs only a 4-2 trump division.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan, Egypt open trade talks

CAIRO (Petra) — Jordanian-Egyptian talks started here on Saturday on implementation of a trade cooperation protocol signed two years ago through which new trade agreements were reached to provide duty customs exemptions for exports between the two countries. The Jordanian delegation is headed by Secretary-General of the Ministry of Trade and Industry Marwan Amin.

Singapore hangs 2 Nigerians, Malaysian

SINGAPORE (R) — Two Nigerians and a Malaysian convicted of heroin trafficking were hanged at Singapore's Changi prison, the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) said on Saturday. Nigerian nationals Gabriel Okonkwo, 33, and Paul Okochukwa Ngwudo, 29, were arrested in December 1990 in a hotel room in Singapore for trafficking in 538.3 grammes of heroin, it said. Malaysian Lim Swee Tiong, 43, was arrested in June 1991 at a bus stop bordering Malaysia for trafficking in 24.91 grammes of heroin. A CNB statement said. The three men were hanged on Friday. The death sentence is mandatory in Singapore for anyone found guilty of trafficking in more than 15 grammes of heroin, 30 grammes of morphine or 500 500 grammes of cannabis. Singapore has hanged 72 people for trafficking since it introduced its anti-drug laws in 1975.

Judge refuses to renew North's gun permit

CHANTILLY (AP) — An American judge has refused to renew Oliver North's gun permit because the former marine is "not of good character." Mr. North, the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate, was convicted in 1991 for his role in the Iran-contra arms-for-hostages deal. The verdict was overturned on appeal, but Judge James L. Berry said in Monday's decision that he could not ignore Mr. North's conviction "for crimes involving moral turpitude." Mr. North, who received notice of Mr. Berry's decision in the mail Friday, had been allowed to carry up to three concealed handguns, but his permit expired in March. His campaign staff claimed the decision was politically motivated. Mr. Berry, a Democrat, granted Mr. North his permit in 1992. "In 1992 Judge Berry found Oliver North to be of good character," campaign spokesman Mark Merritt said. "The only difference between 1992 and 1994 is that this year, Ollie North is running for the Senate."

Bombay blast suspect sheltered in Thailand

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A key suspect in last year's Bombay serial blasts, allegedly sheltered by Pakistani intelligence, was shifted briefly to Thailand to avoid detection, the federal detective agency said here Saturday. Yakub Abdul Razak Memon, 33, who was arrested in New Delhi's railway station Friday, was moved to Bangkok last April by Pakistani agents with his family for 12 days, a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) spokesman said. Some Minister Shankarrao Chavan has said India had "irrefutable" evidence of Pakistan's involvement in the world's worst urban guerrilla strike following Mr. Memon's arrest and the seizure of incriminating documents and false passports. More than 300 people were killed and a dozen-odd landmarks damaged in the chain bombings which rocked India's financial heart. The CBI official said Mr. Memon and his family travelled to Thailand with false Pakistani passports and identities provided by Islamabad. Pakistan has denied involvement in the blasts and charges of sheltering suspects.

Iran seizes 55 tonnes of drugs

TEHRAN (AFP) — Police seized 55 tonnes of drugs in four months up to July 21, an 11 per cent leap on the same period in 1993, the official IRNA news agency said Saturday. According to official sources, some 10,000 drug traffickers — including 128 foreigners — and 15,000 drug addicts have been arrested since the beginning of this year. A total of almost 95 tonnes of drugs, mainly opium from Afghanistan and Pakistan, were seized in Iran in 1993. Drug trafficking and consumption were strictly banned in Iran under a law passed in 1989 laying down the death penalty for any person found with more than 30 grammes heroin or more than five kilograms of opium.

Protests threaten Russian nuclear chaos

MOSCOW (AFP) — Workers who have not been paid for months pressed on with sit-down protests at two of Russia's nuclear power stations Saturday, amid chaos throughout the country's nuclear networks. The workers have camped outside the plants' administrative buildings and refused to go home after their shifts since July 28, the Interfax agency said. The protesters at the Smolensk station, west of Moscow, and the Kola station in Russia's far north are demanding their wages be paid and that electricity consumers pay their bills, the agency said. The Sevodnya newspaper said Saturday that more than 550 workers at the two plants had not been paid since April. Interfax added that staff at Russia's seven other nuclear power plants were supporting the protest. The situation countrywide is "in a crisis and could soon become an emergency," the Russian nuclear workers' union was quoted as saying by Sevodnya.

Former Italian minister rearrested

ROME (R) — Former Italian Health Minister Francesco de Lorenzo, freed from prison last month under a disputed government decree limiting pre-trial detention, was arrested again on Saturday, judicial sources said. The ministers' tribunal — a special body dealing with cases involving past and present members of government — issued a warrant for Mr. de Lorenzo in connection with alleged corruption involving the health service. Police subsequently detained him in the southern city of Naples where he has been under house arrest since July 14. Mr. de Lorenzo was one of the high profile suspects who got out of jail in July when Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's government passed a controversial decree curbing magistrates' use of pre-trial custody. As he left Naples' Regiole prison last month, protesters jeered "Thief, thief," and threw coins at the former minister, hated because he is believed to have plundered huge sums which should have been used to treat the sick.

Cousin of Afi jailed for adultery

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The cousin of Egyptian Interior Minister Hassan Al Afi was jailed for nine months Saturday by a Khartoum court for adultery and attempted bribery, the state-run Sudan News Agency (SUNA) reported Saturday. The agency said the central Khartoum public order criminal court also ordered Farouq Hassan Al Afi, personnel director of the Egyptian irrigation office in Sudan to pay a 50,000 Sudanese pound (around \$170) fine. Another three months will be added to his sentence if he fails to pay, the court ordered. SUNA said the court ordered Mr. Afi expelled from the country once he had completed his sentence. The third-ranking official at the Egyptian irrigation office here was also ordered to quit the country. According to the agency Mr. Afi was staying in a company house in the Sudanese capital which he used as a place for practising adultery and vice. Following a tip-off from neighbours police raided the house and caught him "red-handed," SUNA said, adding that Mr. Afi offered the police a huge sum of money in a bid to bribe himself out of trouble. The incident is thought likely to further strain the already deteriorating relations between the two neighbouring countries. The Khartoum authorities earlier this year took over the Egyptian irrigation houses on grounds that they originally belonged to Khartoum city council and were only rented by the Egyptian administration.



A mother and her sick child wait at a hospital in a camp for Rwandan Hutu refugees at Gikoukoro in the French protection zone in south west Rwanda. The French troops will be replaced by the end of the month by a U.N. protection force (AFP photo)

Food starts arriving for Rwandans in Zaire border

KIGALI (Agencies) — The first big food consignment for hundreds of thousands of starving Rwandan refugees arrived in the Zairean border town of Bukavu on Saturday, U.N. officials said.

In the east of Rwanda, which has been under the control of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) for three months, between 3,000 and 5,000 people of the majority Hutu tribe were fleeing to neighbouring Tanzania every day, an aid worker said. The aid worker said 1,000 to 2,000 more were trekking south into Burundi. They obviously were frightened of the RPF, which is dominated by the minority Tutsi tribe, U.N. officials said.

The RPF seized power in early July after a three-month offensive during which troops of the then Hutu government and militiamen massacred an estimated 500,000 people, mostly Tutsis.

Millions of Rwandans, mostly Hutus, have fled across the country's borders, creating a humanitarian catastrophe as international aid agencies struggle to care for them. At least 25,000 have died, many from a cholera epidemic.

The U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) said 17.5 tonnes of food reached Bukavu and three aircraft carrying more food were also expected later on Saturday.

"These are the first food deliveries of any significance to the several hundred thousand Rwandan refugees in Bukavu," said Trevor Page, leading the WFP relief effort.

'Burundi could be another Rwanda'

LONDON (Agencies) — Burundi has split into armed factions and could suffer ethnic bloodshed reminiscent of the recent slaughter in neighbouring Rwanda, Amnesty International warned here Friday.

A report from the human rights organisation, based on the findings of an investigating team that has just completed a 10-day mission to the country, said "hundreds of people are being killed in massacres every month" and determined that "the criminal justice system has all but completely broken down."

It described Burundi as potentially "another Rwanda."

Burundi, as is the case in Rwanda, is populated by Hutu and Tutsi.

The Amnesty team "found (Burundi) divided into hostile communities."

"Hundreds of killings were continuing to be carried out by armed groups or armed forces," according to the re-

Mr. Page told Reuters that at least 23 per cent of refugees faced severe malnutrition and the WFP needed a minimum of 50 tonnes of food daily for the Bukavu refugee population.

"This flight arranged with Norwegian church aid and LWF (Lutheran World Federation) brings hopes that we are able to prevent a disaster occurring in Bukavu," Mr. Page said.

"However, the threat of tens of thousands of more refugees arriving from north-western Rwanda is always there and we must keep the supplies coming in."

About 1,700 troops from the United States, Britain, Canada and Australia are deployed in Rwanda to help rebuild war-damaged infrastructure and care for homecoming refugees.

But many of those returning appear not to be refugees who flee the country in recent weeks but Tutsis whose families went into exile in 1959, when a bloody Hutu uprising overthrew the Tutsi feudal monarchy.

Rwanda's vice president and defence minister, General Paul Kagame, on Saturday denied media reports that RPF soldiers were harassing refugees to prevent them from returning home.

In an interview with Radio Rwanda, the RPF leader accused the rival Hutu community of harassing refugees, and said that as far as the "Tutsi-based RPF was concerned 'if a case (of harassment) is notified it would be an isolated case and not generalised'."

"Several hundred people died in Muramvya province in July alone."

The report disclosed that one Amnesty delegate "visited a newly discovered mass grave in Kirundo province, bordering Rwanda, which is believed to contain the remains of unknown numbers of Rwandan refugees thought to have been killed in mid-June this year."

Amnesty called for a monitoring mission from the Organisation of African Unity in Burundi to be reinforced and deplored the fact that "nothing is being done at the national or international level" to bring those responsible for the killings last year.

It also appealed for international observers to be deployed in Rwanda "to ensure effective and impartial investigations."

"It could go their way," said Mike Dottridge, the human rights organisation's programme director for Africa

Palestine People's Party leader criticises PLO over Jerusalem stand

AMMAN (J.T.) — Secretary General of the Palestine People's Party (PPP) Bashir Barghouti has criticised attempts by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to exacerbate difference with Jordan over the issue of Jerusalem and said these differences could be solved in a friendly manner without resorting to the Arab League or any other side.

In a lecture delivered Thursday in the West Bank city of Beit Jala, Mr. Barghouti said he considered these attempts to expand differences as an escape from the "main battle scene" by plotting "a side quarrel because our struggle over Jerusalem is originally with the occupation authorities."

Mr. Barghouti said in his lecture, whose text was faxed to the Jordan Times from Jerusalem, that Jordan has continued to take care of holy places and Islamic Waqf since it severed legal and administrative ties with the West Bank in 1988 in agreement with the Palestinians.

"Thus our duty requires that we should view Jerusalem not only as holy places, but also we should view it as an integral part of the lands occupied in 1967 and lands to which (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 242 applies, which significance is enhanced by its religious status," he said.

Mr. Barghouti also said that objections to the recent trilateral summit of His Majesty King Hussein, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and American President Bill Clinton were baseless.

"Jordan is not a foreign country that we do not care about. Several bonds tie us with it. They (Jordan) had announced since the beginning of the negotiations process that they want to negotiate over their lands in Ghor Al Safi and Al Himma area and to regain their water rights. These goals are about to be achieved and I think it is a shame to accuse people who were honest with themselves because they did not claim they were negotiating to regain Jaffa."

Mr. Barghouti said the

Palestinians were living through a new situation, not only because of the Cairo agreement or the return of the Palestinian leadership to the self-rule areas, but also "because the Arab status quo does not offer any substitutes" and we are hostages to this status quo and would be deceiving ourselves if we talk about forgetting about the Cairo agreement or to substitute it with wholly new agreements or reciting slogans from yesterdays."

He added: "The bet on the Soviet Union and Arab solidarity has failed and it is useless to continue to raise slogans that are based on bets."

The PPP leader said the Palestine authority now faced two choices: Whether to become a civil administration in Gaza and Jericho, or to develop the agreement on the way of establishing a Palestinian state.

Mr. Barghouti said the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was still in a better position than the PNA whose authority is limited by the Cairo agreement, noting that there is a Palestinian majority living outside Palestine and the self-rule areas.

He said the PLO's duties include working on regaining Jerusalem and solving the issues of refugees and settlements in accordance with international legitimacy.

Thus, he said, the PLO has more duties than the PNA, and mixing the two authorities would undermine struggle to achieve these goals.

He warned that there was a danger of splits emerging in the lines of the Palestinian people if the PLO merges with the PNA since the PLO was created outside Palestine and where three to four million refugees are living.

"If the PLO merges within the PNA it will leave a vacuum, prompting Palestinians to fill it which means there is a danger of splitting the Palestinian people," he said.

Mr. Barghouti called for preserving the PLO and for establishing new departments in the organisation for Jerusalem, refugees and settlements.

New army ruler rejects call to reinstate Jawara

BANJUL (AFP) — Lieutenant Yaha Jammeh, leader of a military coup that overthrew Gambia's longtime ruler President Dawda Jawara last month, has rejected a Western threat to return the ousted president to power or face a cut-off in aid.

The new head of state also issued a decree giving the ruling Provisional Council of the Armed Forces authority to detain members of the armed forces or police considered a national security threat for up to six months.

About 20 military men and police officers are currently in detention, according to official sources.

In a speech to some 30,000 people at a stadium in the capital's suburbs Friday, the new head of state said the council could not accept the condition laid down by certain countries linking their continued aid to Mr. Jawara's return to power.

After the bloodless July 23 coup, the 12-nation European Union condemned the overthrow of Gambia's democratically-elected government and called on the army to return to barracks or face a "review" of EU states' aid programmes.

Mr. Jammeh, in his first public address since the military takeover, reaffirmed that the council did not plan to remain in power or serve the interests of a particular group, but only to end looting of the country's resources by a minority.

He pledged to recover funds allegedly defrauded by the former government down to the last "butut," the smallest denomination of Gambian currency.

Pain caused by a economic structural adjustment programme would be borne not just by the poor, but by all levels of society, he added in the speech which drew enthusiastic applause.

A decree issued Friday said members of the armed forces or police considered a threat to the state could be detained for up to six months.

Their cases could be reviewed every 30 days by the vice-president, who in turn must submit them to a court

which included an army lieutenant and a police inspector.

A second decree published Friday banned the country's five political parties, suspended after the coup, from making "propaganda" or "publicity."

Summit offensive

In Abuja, Gambia's vice-president, one of the group of young officers who seized power in the coup is on the diplomatic offensive for his government at the West African summit in Nigeria.

Lt. Sena Sabally, a shy, slightly-hinted 29-year-old, read a message from head of state Lt. Jammeh to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with a rapid-fire delivery more suited to the parade ground than the conference hall.

He was finding the summit a big challenge, he told Reuters.

"I have a lot to learn from it to apply in friendship ties as far as ECOWAS countries are concerned," he said.

His delegation in their neat camouflage fatigues have attracted much attention in Abuja as ECOWAS' newest government.

Lt. Sabally, the most junior in rank of three military leaders at the summit, smartly saluted Nigeria's General Sani Abacha as he returned to his seat from the podium on Friday.

In an interview with Reuters, he said the July 2 coup had been planned about a week before while Mr. Jawara was on holiday at his London residence.

"The way things were going by the former regime it was necessary for us to come on stage and do something for the country," he said.

"There was rampant corruption and injustice in the judicial system, there were two separate laws, one for the poor and one for the rich people."

He said the coup plotters had no advance contact with Senegal, which sent troops to stop a coup attempt in 1981.

"We had no contact with

COLUMN

Tea at the rectory takes on new meaning

TREVISIO, Italy (R) — A Polish Orthodox priest who ran a drug rehabilitation centre near the northern Italian town of Treviso has been arrested on charges of cocaine trafficking. Plainclothes police posing as clients arrested Fausto Lino Vivani, 36, the leader of the small Orthodox community in the town of Montebelluna di Sarnade, after they found a small quantity of cocaine at his home. The arrest was part of a larger investigation into drug trafficking in the area and police said they had received anonymous tips that the priest had sold drugs during parties at the rectory.

Drummer ilkes to wake up in the morning

LOS ANGELES (R) — Former Guns N' Roses drummer Steven Adler said he is recovering from an overdose of heroin and cocaine, and hopes he can kick the addiction that forced him out of the hard-living band in 1990. "I'm detoxing after doing heroin and coke and I'm just thankful I'm alive and that I was able to get in here," Adler, 29, said from Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre. "The whole idea of coming here and detoxing is to stay off drugs. I wanna start working again." "It's great waking up in the morning and not being sick."

War stops for the movies

LONDON (R) — The head of Sarajevo's only working cinema is flying to Scotland to choose additions to its depleted stock from among the 350 films to be shown at the Edinburgh Film Festival, organisers said. After protracted negotiations, Almir Palata and his assistant Asja Hafner were flown out of the besieged Bosnian capital to Zagreb by the United Nations, working in collaboration with British diplomats, they said. The two were expected to arrive in Edinburgh late Friday and view many of the films to be shown at the festival before it begins on Aug. 13.

May I introduce myself? Robson, car thief

SAO PAULO (R) — A Brazilian car thief who specialised in stealing luxury BMW models advertised his trade by distributing calling cards to potential clients stating his profession as "thief," police said. Detectives who arrested Robson Augusto Do Nascimento Araujo found business cards saying he worked for the fictitious firm of Thefts and Holdups Ltd., on 666 Crime Street, Delinquents Garden. Using the false name Robson Kieber Augusto, he gave his title as "ladrao" (thief). "In my 12 years in the Police Department I have never come across such insolence," police chief Valtor De Abreu said.

Indian court suspends ruling on Muslim divorce

NEW DELHI (AP) — The Supreme Court has ordered a review of a lower court decision that struck down the age-old Muslim divorce custom as unconstitutional. The ruling by a two-judge bench Thursday means that, for the time being, a Muslim can again divorce his wife by saying "talaq" three times in succession. "Talaq" means divorce in the Arabic language. The divorce 25 years ago of Khatoun Nisa has become a test case for the priority of the nation's secular constitution over the authority of religious law in personal affairs like marriage and divorce. India is the home of more than 100 million Muslims, who follow the Muslim personal law. Hindus are 62 per cent of India's population of 900 million. In its ruling, the Supreme Court said that in view of the importance of the issue, a panel of three judges will consider the case in November. Feminists often argue that the Muslim code is abused by men who divorce their wives for the flimsiest of reasons, but in Ms. Nisa's case it is the woman who is seeking that the law be upheld.